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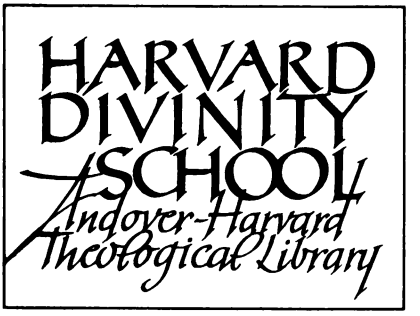
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John Ives

UNIVERSALISM,

THE

DOCTRINE

OF

THE BIBLE.

BY REV. ASHER MOORE.

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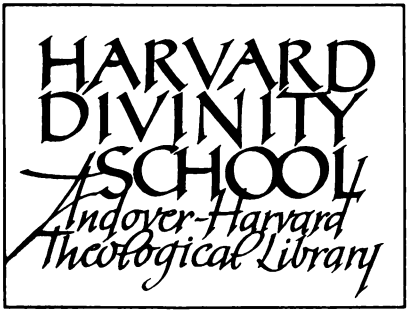
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INTRODUCTION.

We propose in the work upon which we now enter, to consider a variety of important and interesting subjects. And we shall aim so to connect the several topics of discourse as to present a tolerable synopsis of Universalist Theology. Beginning with the Divine Existence and the great work of creation, we intend to close with the final consummation of God's economy in the government of his offspring.

Such is the vast field which we shall attempt in some measure to explore. But the magnitude and the extent of the subject admonish us in the outset to be moderate in our calculations, and to promise no more than an imperfect investigation of some of the more prominent points that will be presented to view. Fully to consider the great theme in all its multiform bearings and relations would require more time than we can bestow, and far greater ability than we can command.

But we are persuaded that the Scriptures record certain momentous facts that rise prominently out of the general subject of which they treat, and

which may be followed in their proper connexion from the *origin* of man to the *ultimate destiny* of our race. And instead of even attempting a thorough examination of the whole subject of Christian Theology, we shall expect merely to note the great *landmarks* that appear in the field before us.—Guided by the lights of revelation, and utter regardless of the vain philosophy of the world and all the wild and visionary speculations of men, wise in their own conceit, we feel a confident assurance, that though we may overlook many important facts, and widely err in regard to others, we can succeed in eliciting all the leading and fundamental truths of our holy religion.

Although sharp controversies have arisen, and unhappy dissensions have ensued, on account of slight disagreements of opinion concerning the religion of Christ, the fact cannot be denied that his avowed followers hold doctrines which embrace the most opposite and conflicting principles. One teaches that God is the Savior of only a part of the human race—another holds that he "is the Savior of all men." One contends that God will *eternalize* sin, and invest it with his own attribute of immortality and unceasingly torment a portion of his own offspring without *intending* ever to do them

any good—and another maintains that all sin is limited in nature and duration, and that though the chastenings inflicted by the Divine hand are not joyous, but grievous to the sufferer, they will "afterward yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness *unto them* which are exercised thereby."—Heb. xii. 9–11. Surely these are not trifling differences, but truths of infinite moment are here involved. And in view of these things, all disputes about the number of persons in the Godhead, the mode of water baptism, the forms of worship and the ordinances of religion, appear too insignificant to be made the theme of anxious inquiry, or the ground of zealous contention and strife. The most deeply important subject that ever engaged the attention of the human mind, is that which relates to the purpose and the destiny of our being. What is "the doctrine of baptism," or of orders in the church, compared with the great problem of man's immortal destiny? And how small and unmeaning is the business of sharp and acrimonious contentions about such things, while the infinitely greater question, involving the endless weal or woe of the human family remains undetermined, and is hardly cared for. Let it first be decided whether God, who "is good unto all," and whose "tender

mercies are over all his works," and who never changes, "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." When this great question, embracing the highest interests and involving our final and immortal destiny, is fully settled, other subjects, less momentous, may properly be considered.

We feel unwilling to employ our time and waste our energies in controverting any minor point of doctrine, while a great and important question, involving the ultimate destiny of the human race, is undecided in the public mind. After ages of inquiry and disputation, this question is not yet settled. With the help of God, we are determined to do all that we can toward deciding the controversy. And though we claim no superior powers, we are fully impressed with the belief, that leaving all the creeds of men out of view, and divesting the mind of all unreasonable prejudice, a direct appeal to the oracles of divine truth will enable us to understand "all the counsel of God." We consider the Scriptures sufficiently explicit on every important point of faith to direct the honest and candid mind aright. And one reason why the testimony of the Divine Spirit is not now more generally understood, is, that the investigations of

Christian people have been too much devoted to things that belong not to essential truths. The time, we think, has now come when the most important of all doctrines must be decided. There is a spirit of inquiry abroad in the land that will never rest satisfied until it is known whether St. Paul testified truly, when he declared that "*the living God is the Savior of all men.*" We believe that the apostle was right. And we are not without hope that we shall be among the humble instruments in the hands of God of making known this great and glorious truth to many who are "in darkness even until now," and who groan in the bondage of fear!

We should most heartily rejoice to witness a more general and earnest attention to the deeply interesting and absorbing theme of which we have thus spoken. And we are free to confess in this early stage of our labor that the chief objects which we have in view, is to show by the word of God for what high and holy purpose we were called into existence, and what should be the final end of our being. Let it not be supposed, however, that this one subject will be constantly pressed upon the attention of the reader, to the utter neglect of every other topic embraced in the general theme. This

is the chief and highest end at which we aim. Bu in the prosecution of the work, we venture to hop that the candid and atttentive reader will be both interested and profitted in regard to a variety o topics, all bearing upon, or holding a certain rela· tion to the one general and glorious conclusion.

UNIVERSALISM,

THE DOCTRINE OF THE BIBLE.

CHAPTER I.

THE DIVINE EXISTENCE.

"It is related of Epicurus, that when a boy, reading with his preceptor these verses of Hesiod,

> "Eldest of beings, Chaos first arose,
> Thence Earth wide stretched, the steadfast seat of all
> The Immortals,"

the young scholar first betrayed his inquisitive genius by asking, 'And Chaos whence?' When in his riper years he had persuaded himself that the question was sufficiently answered by saying that Chaos arose from the concourse of atoms, it is strange that the same inquisitive spirit did not again suggest the question, 'whence?' And it is clear that however often the question 'whence?' had been answered, it would still start up as at first." It is therefore easily perceived that however remotely we may trace the causes of existing things, and whatever curious and fanciful theories we may indulge on this subject, we must ultimately arrive at the grand conclusion that there was in existence before all created things, a life-giving and an intelli-

gent FIRST CAUSE. The skill and design manifested in the works of creation—the order and harmony of the universe—and the wise and perfect adaptation of one thing to another, and of means to ends can be rationally and satisfactorily accounted for in no other way. This great CAUSE we call GOD—leaving others to call it what they please. If any choose to call it *Nature* or the *Laws* of Nature, we shall not dispute their right, though we must question their good sense. And, indeed, we are strongly inclined to the belief that the whole controversy is more about words than any thing else: for it seems impossible for the mind to believe that any sane man is actually an ATHEIST!

No credulity can go beyond that which supposes that all created objects have come into existence without the will of a presiding Intelligence, and just as blind and unknowing chance happened to determine! He who should believe that a watch, or the most curiously wrought piece of mechanism that human ingenuity ever invented, came together of itself, and arranged all its motions and operations, without any previous skill or design, would be reasonable, compared with him who should believe that my hand or my eye was produced by a blind and an unthinking power! And in viewing ourselves—mere specks in the immensity of God's works, may we not well say with the devout and contemplative Psalmist, "He that planted the ear, shall *He* not hear. He that formed the eye, shall *He* not see?"

One of the most convincing proofs of the wisdom and the power of God, is presented in the fact that every created object of which we have any know-

ledge, is a *compound;* and must therefore have been composed of particles or elements that previously existed in a simple state. And the distinct forms, and properties, and infinitely diversified organizations which the works of creation exhibit, can be explained by no fancied *tendency* of things to form themselves with the different shapes and colors and qualities by which they are distinguished. TURNER, in his Sacred History of the World, has said with good sense and true philosophy :—

"If the material world had been one uniform homogeneous mass, its eternal existence would have been always a possibility. It would then not have contained any evidence in itself to contradict the supposition. But the actual fact is, that all visible nature is a multifarious association of very compounded substances. Nothing is simple—nothing is uncompounded. Every thing we see, feel, or handle is a composition, a mixture or union of more particles, or of more elements than one. Not merely the grosser earthly bodies are so, but even the water, the air, andthe light are in this compounded state. Now it is impossible that any compound can have been eternally a compound. Composition and eternity are as incompatible as to be and not to be. The particles of which compounds consist must have been in some other state before they were compounded together. The single condition of the elements must have preceded their union in the composition; and thus it is physically impossible that a compound can have been eternal. The schoolboy perceives at once that his plumcake cannot have been eternal! The plums, the flour, the butter, the eggs, and the sugar, of which it is

composed, must have been in some other place or state, before they were brought together to make the substance which gratifies him. So the mighty world we live on, the rocks, the mountains, the minerals—so every substance around us, animate and inanimate,—cannot have been eternal, because every one is a combination of numerous particles, usually very heterogeneous, and the primary elements of each must have been in their elementary state, and in some other position, before they moved and joined into their compounded one."

In view of the important and undeniable fact here stated, what can be more manifest to the thinking mind than that some skilful and contriving hand has moulded the materials of nature into the infinitely varied forms and substances which we behold around us? These formations can be traced to no natural tendency of things, which chance, in its wild workings, might have determined; but they exhibit incontestible proofs of previous arrangements and skilfully devised plans to produce certain and distinct results. And here we ask permission to introduce another extract from the author whom we have just cited.

"In no part of our terrestrial abode is a creating mind more visible than in its *vegetable* kingdom; for, here, we see everywhere specific combinations producing specific effects, and no other, and with undeviating constancy and with the exactest certainty, each phenomenon arising from a peculiar and adapted organization distinct from every other, which invariably produces its suited result, and only that; yet each but the union, in different arrangements and quantities, of the same common particles

No fancied tendency will explain this. The same particles could not tend to be a thousand dissimilar things. No assumed tendency can explain diversity: a tendency to diversity is an impossibility, because that would be a tendency to be and yet not to be, which may be justly deemed an absurdity. If the particles of vegetable nature tended to form a rose, the same particles could have no tendency in themselves to compose a lily. All tendency, if such a thing existed, must be specific and uniform; it could not be variable. A tendency to form, is a tendency to do so, but cannot be also a tendency not to do so. A tendency to form a rose could never form a lily, because that would be a tendency to form and not form a rose, which would be both a self-contradiction and an impossibility. No presumed tendency can therefore explain the numerous diversities of vegetable organization. All plants are formed of similar component particles, varying only in arrangement and amount; and no particles that tended to form one composition could tend to form another. But instead of vegetable nature being only one composition, there are from 40,000 to 80,000 diversified species. The theory of tendencies is a mere fallacy of words. Not a single tendency has been proved to exist. All nature is, in each of its departments, an assemblage of various compounds of similar elementary particles. A tendency of these to form any one would form only that one, and no other. But instead of all things being only multiples of a single compound, the universal character of nature is, in all its classes, that of multiform multiplicity; of

compound diversity so inexhaustible, that of the inexpressible millions of millions of substances which are around us, scarcely any one is the exact counterpart of another.

"You will therefore only smile when you find that some men can gravely say, and others gravely repeat, that one particle tended to unite with another, and these with others, but only in a straight line, and then, that they tended to bend that line into a ring, and then to enlarge that into a vessel, and then to branch out that into other vessels, and then to make bone, and then to make blood, and then to form nerves and flesh, and then to extend into limbs, and then to make a heart, and then a pair of lungs, and then all the other functions of the human body, one after another: giving thus a thousand different and inconsistent tendencies to the same elementary particles, none of which can be proved, or is likely, to have had any tendency at all."

There is something peculiarly forcible and convincing in the simple facts which are here presented; and to the reasoning mind they exhibit the utter impossibility of the multifarious combinations that exist in nature, without the contrivances of wisdom and the directions of infinite skill. And we are persuaded that the more carefully these facts are considered, the more firm will be the conviction of every rational man that the Psalmist spake the words of truth and soberness, when he said in view of the wonderful productions of almighty Power,—"O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches!"

The heavens and the earth—the ocean and the air, are filled with the marvellous doings of Him who "is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working!" It is He who directs the varying seasons of the year, and has filled the earth with innumerable forms of animal and vegetable life, and determined the bounds of our habitation. While his mighty hand directs the motions of unnumbered worlds, his unsleeping eye sees the sparrow that falls to the ground—while he upholds the universal frame of nature, he hears the ravens when they cry and stops the young eagles' mouths with food—and while he exists far beyond the extent of our vision, he is "not far from every one of us: *for in him we live, and move, and have our being.*"

CHAPTER II.

THE CREATION.

By the "six days" in which the work of creation is said to have been accomplished, we should perhaps understand so many ages or dispensations. Six periods of time, called "days" in the account, were occupied in the work of creation: and a like period of rest afterwards ensued, in which, it is not unreasonable to suppose, the whole work gradually attained a state of perfection. We cannot therefore positively determine whether the Mosaic account should be dated at the commencement, or at the close of the work of creation. Nor is it really important that we should know: for our conviction of the fact that "God created the heaven and the earth," does not depend upon our knowledge of the precise *time* when the work was either begun or finished.

And as to the discrepancy which some sharp-sighted philosophers profess to have detected between the first and the second chapters of the book of Genesis, we think the alleged contradiction is, after all, to be imputed to a very superficial reading. For although the first chapter records the creation of all things, and the second speaks of a time when "there was not a man to till the ground," it should be understood that the sacred historian first gives a mere synopsis of the whole subject,

and afterwards enters more into detail. After having briefly and comprehensively stated all the material facts connected with the history, it is not strange that he should have said, "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created." He referred to what he had before declared; and so far from contradicting himself, he merely repeated in another form and with greater particularity, the generations or the order of the work of creation. And we should hardly charge a biographer with absurdity or inconsistency, if he should first record the time of a man's birth and the time of his death, and afterwards in the same work speak of a time when the man was still in existence, and actively engaged in the affairs of life. But we need not pursue this train of thought. And we think it may well be questioned whether any good end can be gained by attaching great importance to all the empty quibbles aud vain cavils of skepticism.

But we desire particularly to notice the important facts stated at the close of the general account of the creation. These facts are, that God saw every thing that he had made; and that when he thus saw all his work, he was well satisfied, and perceived that they were perfectly good. "And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good." We are here taught,

1st. That God *saw* every thing that he had made, and was therefore well acquainted with all the productions of his hands. There was nothing in any creature to which he had given life, nor in the whole world which he had spoken into being by the word of his power, but what his omniscient

eye saw, and his infinite understanding perfectly understood. He knew the nature, the wants and the capabilities of his entire animated creation; and clearly perceived all the feelings, desires and passions that dwell in the earthly constitution of man. His power alone produced the work, and nothing, either immediate or remote, was in any wise concealed from his all-searching vision. Whatever was in man the great Creator himself implanted there. And God plainly foresaw all the bearings and operations and results of every cause that could ever possibly affect the condition or the destiny of any of his creatures. We are here taught,

2d. That with this perfect knowledge of all the productions of his omnific power, God pronounced the whole work of creation—every thing that he had made, *very good.* He was a Being of unbounded and immeasurable love—for "*God is love,*" and he possesses nothing by measure. He had no counsellor to offer advice and none to instruct him. No principle opposed to his own pure and holy nature could have actuated his will or influenced the exercise of his creative energy. No feeling of malevolence (for none existed with him) could have controlled the operations of his wisdom and power. He was prompted only by the impulses of his own nature. He intended his work to be worthy of himself. And when it was completed he saw the whole, and with unmingled satisfaction pronounced it all "VERY GOOD."

From this simple declaration we can reasonably infer nothing less than that the life of every creature was intended to be a blessing—that all were constituted for enjoyment—and, in a word, that every

thing was to be a *gainer* by existence. For
d impeach the benevolence as well as the
y of God, to suppose that he would pro-
any of his creatures *very good*, with the
and infallible knowledge that such creature's
ce ever was or ever will be a *curse*.
n then is the state in which we find the
creation as it came from the forming hand
great *Creator*. And so far, we are free to
ıe, there is a perfect concurrence of senti-
among all believers in divine revelation.
ver diversities of opinion may be held in
to the final results of God's dealings with
atures, all will agree that the works of crea-
ere all originally GOOD. The note of Dr. A.
E on the declarations in question, namely,
od *saw* every thing, and pronounced it *very*
nost clearly and forcibly expresses the truth
whole matter. And we are happy to find
distinguished opposer in doctrine has so
stated the very truth which we aim to set
He says, "*and behold, it was very good.*
latively or only good: as good as they could
he plan wise, the work well executed, the
nt parts properly arranged, their nature,
mode of existence, manner of propagation,
mode of sustenance, &c., &c., properly and
nently established and secured; for every
was formed to the utmost perfection of its
, so that nothing could be added or dimin-
vithout encumbering the operations of matter
irit on the one hand, or rendering them in-
t to the end proposed, on the other; and God
done all these marvellous works, as to be
d *in* all, *by* all, and *through* all."

CHAPTER III.

THE DIVINE PURPOSE IN THE CREA

HAVING proceeded thus far, we are now pr
to state a few self-evident propositions, tha
a most important bearing upon our whole s
We have seen at the close of the creation a
that was in all respects well known to God, a
him pronounced *very good*. So far all his c
were accomplished, and the ends of his b
lence fully attained. But we intend to pu
inquiries still farther, and ascertain, if possil
divine purpose in reference to our whole ex
and the final destiny of our being.

1st. In creating man, God designed him fo
particular *end;* or else he did not thus desig
That the former of these propositions is true,
necessarily to result from the nature and ch
which the Scriptures and all reasonable m
cribe to the Divinity. He is infinite in wi
and a wise being never puts forth his power
work without *design*. Nor can we reasonabl
pose that with a perfect knowledge of all his
God would pronounce them either good
without reference to some *purpose* for wh
intended them.

When a man constructs a machine and pron
it *good*, we all understand him to mean
will operate according to his intentions, an

duce the *results* which he designed—or at least that his estimate of its value depends upon the *ends* which he expects it to accomplish. With the little and erring wisdom which we possess, the marks of design appear in all our doings. And notwithstanding the infinite diversity of opinions which prevails among men, it would seem impossible for any thinking man really to believe that *He* who is the very source of all wisdom should give us existence without *designing* the end of our being.

Of the divine purpose in the creation of the material world which we inhabit, we read in the 45th chapter of Isaiah, "For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it, he hath established it, he created it not in vain, *he formed it to be inhabited.*" Such is the purpose for which the earth was formed. And shall we suppose that man, the last and noblest work of God upon its surface—man, who was created in the likeness and image of his Maker, was created for no final purpose? We should be sorry to believe that any man seriously holds such an opinion. All concur in the belief of this simple but important fact, that man was made for some purpose. And it appears so self-evident and undeniable, that nothing farther need be said to substantiate it.

2d. The *end* for which God purposed man was *benevolent;* or else it was not benevolent. The affirmative of this proposition may be established by the same train of argument which we have already employed. God was a being of perfect and unbounded goodness. No extraneous cause could

possibly have influenced his mind in the work which he intended to perform. Love alone prompted the exercise of his creative power; and whatever he purposed must have been perfectly compatible with the principles of his own nature. Every thing was made according to his own will; and all the purposes of his mind were formed independently of any influence without himself.

When, therefore, we come to the Scriptures, we find the most conclusive and satisfactory proof that the purpose of the Almighty in the creation was *good, and only good.* Jesus is called "*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*" His death was embraced in the original purpose of God in the creation of man. And who need be informed that the Lamb was slain as a ransom for our race from sin and death and every enemy? St. Paul speaks on this interesting theme in language not to be misunderstood. To Titus he says, "In hope of *eternal life,* which God that cannot lie, *promised before the world began.*" Our Maker could have *promised* nothing but what he *purposed* to accomplish. And in making this promise, or in forming this purpose in his mind *before the world began,* he must surely have intended that man should become the happy participant of the blessing promised. The same inspired author moreover speaks to Timothy of the *purpose and grace of God,* given us in Christ Jesus *before the world began,* but now made manifest by the appearing of him who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. That divine purpose which was formed before the breath of life was breathed into man, was therefo

gracious; and in making it manifest to man, the Savior of the world revealed the resurrection state of immortal glory and bliss.

And as the benevolent and gracious purpose of our Maker in reference to the destiny of man, was formed in his own mind before the world began, the conclusion seems reasonably to follow that what he purposed for one man he purposed for all men. For we cannot conceive what could possibly have prompted him to form more than *one purpose*—or to design a part of his offspring for a benevolent end, and exclude the remainder from all the blessings of his grace and the joys of his redemption. And accordingly we find it thus plainly declared in the word of life, that God "hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath *purposed in himself;* that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one *all things* in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him?" Ephes. i. 8–10.

Such, then, according to the Scriptures, was the original *purpose* of God in reference to the ultimate destiny of that race of beings upon whom he was graciously pleased to impress the likeness and image of himself. He intended all men for eventual happiness. And in order to accomplish that benevolent intention, he sent his only begotten and well beloved Son to taste death for every man, to give his life a ransom for the world, and to draw all men unto himself!

3d. We now come to state our last proposition, which contains the substance of the whole argu-

ment. *God knew when he formed the benevolent purpose of which we have spoken that it would certainly be accomplished, or else he did not know.*

One of these propositions must be *true*, and the other must consequently be *false*. And we feel not a little interested to know on which side the truth is really found. Is God *omniscient?* or is his knowledge *limited?* Did he see the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and promise eternal life in Jesus Christ before the world began, and yet not know the destiny of mankind? Is there a certain point in the progress of his economy, beyond which all is dark and uncertain to his own mind? And did he purpose an *end*, without also devising the necessary *means* for its attainment, and without knowing whether it would ever be accomplished?

What answer is heard in the voice of reason? GOD, a Being of unbounded knowledge and infinite understanding, knew what was in man and what was in the world. He perceived the operations and the results of all causes, however remote, that could ever possibly affect his creatures. And he saw the *end* with as perfect knowledge as he saw any *part*, or even the *beginning* of his work,—otherwise his vision was imperfect and his knowledge limited!

And what says the voice of inspiration, which is of far higher authority on this subject? "*Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.*" "I am God, and there is none like me, *declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done*, saying, *My counsel shall stand, and I will*

do all my pleasure." And can we suppose, in view of these and similar declarations of Scripture, that the final destiny of any man was ever unknown or uncertain to God? He both *knew* all his works and *declared* the end from the beginning. And when he pronounced all his works *very good*, he therefore saw the complete and glorious *accomplishment* of his gracious purpose in the ultimate blessedness of all mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord, who is the life and the Savior of the world.

Here, then, leaving all creeds entirely out of view, is the great conclusion to which we are irresistibly led by the plain teachings of reason and the authoritative instructions of Scripture truth. God had a purpose in the creation of man—that purpose was purely benevolent and gracious—and he *saw and declared* its *accomplishment* from the beginning of the world,—and though heaven and earth should pass away, the sure word of our God will never fail!

Should an objector on receiving the foregoing argument, allege that man is a *free-agent*, he is informed that we shall not dispute that matter with him, because we are unable to perceive that it has any proper connexion with the subject which we have attempted to discuss. Suppose man to be perfectly free—more free by far than the winds of heaven which blow where they list, does it hence follow that the benevolent purpose of God in the creation of man, and his certain knowledge and positive declaration of the execution or fulfilment of that purpose must to any extent be rendered *void?* It does not so appear to our minds. And we have never yet heard anything like a plausible

reason to justify the belief that God has be upon any of his creatures a freedom or a by the agency of which his own purposes wil be defeated! We trust that no such calami ever occur. The God of salvation, "wh hath immortality," will never be baffled plans; nor do we fear that his best purpos ever be frustrated by an agency which h self has bestowed upon man. And thoug is a strange propensity in some persons to fl every subject into wild and extravagant about the *uncontrollable power* of human we are satisfied to believe upon the authorit Scriptures, that *God's counsel shall stand,* a *he will do all his pleasure.*

We therefore rest in the assurance, and with joy unspeakable and full of glory in the that God will never abandon any of the w his hands, or become the foe of any of hi tures; but that he will continue the opera his saving power and his redeeming grac "every knee shall bow and every tongu swear, surely shall say, *In the Lord have I ousness and strength!*"

CHAPTER IV.

THE INTRODUCTION OF SIN INTO THE WORLD.

We have already shown that the entire work of creation, as it came from the forming hand of the Almighty, was *very good.* Every thing was made according to his own will—or, to adopt the language of Scripture, *he created all things for his own pleasure.* There was purpose or design in the Divine Mind in all the productions of creative power—and every thing was pronounced *very good,* because it was clearly foreseen and perfectly understood that God would be glorified *by* all, and *through,* and *in* all the works of his hands.

But the progenitor of our race did not long continue in his primitive state of innocence. Sin and suffering soon entered into the world; and they have ever since been the common lot of humanity, and the great scourge of our whole race. Did evil come into the world by accident? Was it in no sense embraced or contemplated in the original plans of divine wisdom? Has its existence deranged the schemes of the Almighty? And will its unhappy consequences be as enduring as God's own being? These are questions demanding our most careful and serious consideration. And we think they may all be resolved into this one simple question, How, or by what means did sin enter into the world? But before directly attempting to

consider this question, we desire to have it well understood that we believe without a doubt that God intended from the first that sin and suffering should exist in this world. We are fully convinced that our present life, which is only the incipient state of our existence, was intended as a state in which man should be the creature of *hope*, looking onward to a better country, even a heavenly. Man in his original state, formed of the perishable dust of the ground, was not fitted for a perpetual existence without a change of state. Here in this world he was to be "compassed with infirmity"—here he was to be subject to vanity, and the child of sorrow and pain—and here in this earthly tabernacle he was to groan, being burdened, "earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." Hence we find that as soon as sin had entered into the world and man began to experience its sorrows, the gracious promise was given that evil should be subdued and destroyed. *Hope* was thus early encouraged in the human heart. And from that time to the present, it has been strictly true in regard to our existence, that

> "Hope springs eternal in the human breast,
> Man never *is*, but always *to be* blest."

It may be thought quite impossible for us to determine with any tolerable degree of probability how sin first entered into the world. Man was created without sin, and by his Maker pronounced very good. How then came this pure creature, inheriting no depravity, and influenced by no evil examples, to commit sin, and thus to bring dreadful and lasting sufferings upon the world?

An eminent theologian has said, "That man is in a *fallen* state, certainly needs no argument to prove it: the history of the world, with that of the life and miseries of every human being, establish this point beyond successful contradiction. But *how* and by what *agency* was this brought about? Here is a great mystery; and I may appeal to all persons who have read the various comments that have been written on the Mosaic account, whether they have ever yet been satisfied on this part of the subject, though convinced of the fact itself. *Who* was the *Serpent?* Of what *kind*, in what *way* did he seduce the first happy pair? These are questions which *remain yet to be answered.*" CLARKE.

Now we shall not deny that this author felt himself altogether unable to solve the several questions here proposed. But we are persuaded that the inexplicable mystery of which he speaks, does not properly belong to the subject itself, but rather to errors and inconsistencies involved in his own creed. And though we claim no special revelation, nor superior abilities, by the aid of which we are enabled to unlock the deep mysteries that have puzzled abler minds, we still believe that the whole subject, when set free from all unauthorized constructions, will admit of an easy and a rational exposition. We shall be guided in our investigations by the teachings of the Bible, explained consistently with reason, comparing Scripture with Scripture. And instead of attempting to astonish the reader with some fanciful theory, which nobody can understand, and which must fail to satisfy the

inquiring mind, we shall aim at nothing but the truth.

It may be well to remark in this place, that a distinction should be drawn between *physical* evil and what we call *moral* evil, and also between the causes from which they proceed. The former is endured in common by all creatures that bear an earthly nature—while the latter, being the effect of sin, is exclusively confined to intellectual and accountable beings. The irrational brute experiences suffering—but it knows nothing of moral responsibility—it stands amenable to no moral law—and it cannot, therefore, be the subject of penal retribution. But the subject of our present inquiry relates to moral evil or sin, and to the cause by which it was first produced in the world. We may incidentally remark, however, that the physical nature and constitution of man seem not to have been affected in the least by the first transgression. He required the same bodily nourishment, and was subject to the operations of the same general laws, after having sinned, as before. He was originally fitted to be an active, laborious being—for before he had eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, or in other words, before he had known the difference between good and evil by actual experience, "*the Lord God took the man, and put him in the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it.*" Gen. ii. 15. Hence it is easily perceived that before man had sinned, he was not only fitted but actually commanded to toil. His original nature, which we think, has never been radically changed, required for its proper exercise and health all that is now necessary. The

change which the first man experienced on the day of transgression, was purely of a moral nature. He fell from a state of purity and innocence into the guilt and misery of sin. He thus became subject to the influence of a law which he had not before known, the law of sin, which is now in our members. And, we repeat, that our present concern is, to ascertain what caused the first sin, and how it originated in the world.

We shall not attempt to soar upon the wings of imagination to distant worlds, and to amuse the reader with some curious speculation, which God never revealed nor man understood. "The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling," has already seen strange wonders in this subject, and tasked his genius to the utmost to set them forth in all the unreal grandeur of fanciful creations—but all this without yielding any satisfaction to the sober and candid mind. The subject is involved in greater mystery and obscurity since the poetic fancy of a MILTON followed the falls and flights and mischievous freaks of the Prince of Darkness, and at last charged upon him the crime of blasting all the joys of Eden with the deadly and accursed fruits of sin. And we shall not expect to pursue the wild vagaries of dreaming poets, any further than it may seem necessary to explode such relics of their fancies as still serve to mislead and bewilder the minds of those who are most fond of marvellous things which they cannot understand.

MILTON pretended that the whole subject was most clearly revealed in the Scriptures. But his notion seems to require far more explanation than

the Scripture account itself. He says, addressing the SPIRIT,

"Say first, for Heav'n hides nothing from thy view,
Nor the deep tract of Hell, say first what cause
Mov'd our grand parents, in that happy state,
Favor'd of Heav'n so highly, to fall off
From their Creator, and transgress his will,
For one restraint, lords of the world besides?
Th' infernal *Serpent;* he it was, whose guile,
Stirr'd up with envy and revenge, deceiv'd
The mother of mankind, what time his pride
Had cast him out from Heav'n, with all his host
Of rebel angels, by whose aid aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,
He trusted to have equall'd the Most High,
If he oppos'd; and, with ambitious aim,
Against the throne and monarchy of God
Rais'd impious war in Heav'n and battle proud,
With vain attempt."

Here the inspiring Spirit is represented as declaring the cause and the manner of the first sin in the world, showing that a former inhabitant of heaven, having vainly made war against God, was hurled headlong from his high and glorious abode—and that in order to revenge himself, he craftily seduced the first unsuspecting pair of the human family. But we shall find on examination that this view of the subject is attended with insuperable difficulties, and is not only destitute of all support in the word of God, but positively ridiculous and absurd.

From time immemorial the most discordant and contradictory opinions have been entertained in regard to the origin of evil and the cause of sin. Many of the ancients supposed that there were two eternal and opposing principles in the universe, the one *good* and the other *evil*—and that from their

conflicting powers and final admixture the present heterogeneous state of things was produced. This opinion was held by the Magians, a sect among the ancient Persians—and also in the third century of the present era by the Manicheans, a very singular class of religionists, who claimed to be Christians.

But the famous Zoroaster, who flourished more than five hundred years before Christ, perceiving the gross and palpable absurdity of admitting the existence of *two* first causes, undertook the task of reforming the established religion of the Magians. He introduced into his system a god superior to both in which his predecessors had believed, and traced the causes of all good and of all evil to the agency of subordinate beings. "In short, Zoroaster held that there was one supreme independent Being, and under him two principles, or angels; one the angel of light or good, and the other the angel of evil or darkness; that there is a perpetual struggle between them, which shall last to the end of the world; that then the angel of darkness and his disciples shall go into a world of their own, where they shall be punished in everlasting darkness; and the angel of light and his disciples shall go into a world of their own, where they shall be rewarded with everlasting light." PRIDEAUX says of Zoroaster, "To avoid making God the author of evil, his doctrine was, that God originally and directly created only light or good, and that darkness or evil followed it by consequence, as the shadow doth the person; that light or good was only a real production from God, and the other afterwards resulted from it, as the defect thereof."

The ancient theories to which we have thus referred might have appeared to their believers to account most satisfactorily for the origin of evil. They who believed in the existence of two eternal and opposing principles, the one good and the other evil, would very naturally attribute the introduction of sin into the world to the influence of the latter. And they who held to the existence of two subordinate principles under the Supreme power, would in like manner charge the evil of sin upon the angel of darkness.

But these old theories, absurd as we all agree in pronouncing them, conceived in the ignorance of heathenism, and brought forth in an age and country of spiritual darkness, were not half so inconsistent and preposterous as the notion which now generally obtains in regard to the origin of sin. In these days it is commonly believed that sin did not originate in this world, but that it existed before the creation of the human race, and was transplanted here by an evil being who once lived in the perfection of holiness and in the regions of celestial light and glory! We are then by this strange hypothesis directed to a far distant region, and to a period prior to the creation of the world, to find *the origin of sin.*

Now when we consider the utter silence of the Mosaic history in regard to any thing of this kind, it seems almost unaccountable that persons who profess to be guided by the Scriptures should trace the beginning of evil to the very abodes of immaculate purity, and to the most perfect and holy beings that ever adorned the Creator's works! Why not be more consistent, and rather suppose that evil

came from some region of darkness and foul pollution? It is presumed that no person now really believes that the Scriptures plainly teach that sin received its birth in heaven. And in the formation of opinions without express authority—where the mind has full scope to act without restraint, why not fancy something more compatible with reason and the nature of things? The supposition seems both shocking and absurd that the very opposite of holiness should start into being nearest the great Fountain of purity and love! If the scene had been laid in any other part of the vast domains of the universal empire, and among any other beings than those which surround the throne of the immaculate God, the theory in question would seem less preposterous.

Where, in all the record of God's truth can there be found any thing to favor such a notion? Who dare affirm that in the whole history of the first temptation and sin in the world, Moses gives the slightest intimation that sin began its existence in heaven, and was begotten in man through the agency of an immortal being, who forfeited heaven by his own rebellion and wickedness? And if the sacred historian has said nothing of the kind, who is authorized to assert that such must be his meaning? And as to *other* portions of the Scriptures, they not only agree with the account given by Moses, but positively state through whose instrumentality sin was first brought into the world. The apostle Paul says plainly, "By one MAN sin entered into the world." Rom. v. 12. It was by no superhuman being—no former inhabitant of heaven—but by *man*.

We need not therefore travel one step beyond the creation of man to find the origin of that evil which has corrupted the fountains of human happiness through every generation of our sinful race. And we might now proceed at once to offer a plain scriptural exposition of our subject. But a word further touching the more common opinion seems to be demanded.

Suppose then that we admit that the first sin was committed by a holy angel in heaven, and came through his wicked devices into this world. The question will arise in the inquisitive mind, *What caused that angel to sin?* All must admit that no being ever sins except through the influence of temptation. There must therefore have been some *outward temptation* in heaven, or else some evil passion *within* the first sinner to instigate to wickedness—otherwise that angel could not have sinned. If there was outward temptation, heaven could not have been a holy place—and if there were sinful passions within, that angel could not have been an immaculate being. Nay, if that angel had been perfect and holy, what possible influence could temptation of any kind have exerted over his mind? And if sin did once exist in heaven, who can say that it may not again, and finally pervade and depopulate the whole place?

These questions are here proposed to excite a spirit of inquiry in the minds of those who have not yet fully examined the subject under consideration. And though they may be very familiar to many minds, there are others who are not fully aware of the many and insuperable difficulties

involved in the more common view of the first temptation and sin.

But we shall be told that both Peter and Jude speak of *fallen angels.* The fact is not denied. But it should be well understood that neither of them has made any wonderful disclosure about the fall of celestial beings *from heaven* to the earth —to hell—or to any other place. We believe in the existence of *angels*, in the common acceptation of the term—that is to say, we believe in a superior order of beings called angels. But the simple word *angel* is nevertheless expressive of *office*, and does not therefore necessarily signify a superhuman being. The *angels* of the seven churches of Asia, mentioned in the Book of Revelation, were the *ministers* of those churches, and consequently men in the flesh. And some of those angels, messengers or ministers, fell from their first estate, and were drowned in the destruction and perdition of ungodly men!

But we shall search the Scriptures in vain for the account of a celestial being who once fell from heaven, and afterwards brought sin to the abodes of man. Both Peter and Jude, in discoursing upon other subjects, incidentally refer to unfaithful angels or messengers, who were deposed and punished for their wickedness. And they make the reference as though the subject was well understood—and not as if they were declaring some new and wonderful revelation. And we may carefully examine the whole Bible from the first of Genesis to the last of Revelations, without finding any thing to contradict the fact stated by St. Paul, namely, that sin entered into the world *by man.*

CHAPTER V.

THE INTRODUCTION OF SIN INTO THE WORLD.

(CONTINUED.)

HAVING shown that the Scriptures date the commencement of sin in *this world*, and declare that it entered by man, we are now prepared to show *how* man was tempted, and how sin originated. When Adam was created and placed in that state of innocence represented by the garden of Eden, he was allowed freely to partake of the fruit of every tree of the garden, save that "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." The man was acquainted with *good* in his primitive state of innocence. And the prohibition of God was that he should avoid that course of conduct which would give him the knowledge of *evil* as well as of good. Such, we suppose, is what was meant by "the tree of the knowledge of good *and* evil."

Let us here then present the entire Scripture account of the first temptation and sin. "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made: and he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said,

Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked: and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said; I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat? And the man said, The woman, whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me and I did eat." Gen. iii. 1–13.

Here then we have the history and the whole history of the first temptation and sin of man. And here let the question be candidly considered, Is there in this whole account even an intimation concerning a superhuman and an immortal being,

who fell from the regions of celestial light and glory, and brought sin into this world? We feel confident that every candid and unprejudiced person will at once answer, there is surely nothing here to favor any such notion. And, suffer us to say, that it is from what Moses *has* said that we are to learn his meaning—and not from what he has *not said!*

But some person may feel disposed to inquire whether we really suppose that a literal serpent conversed with the woman, and beguiled her to sin. Our answer is, that we do not. But in Scripture language we find that the *serpent* is used as an *emblem* or a *hieroglyphic* of *wisdom*. This fact is manifest from the command of our Lord to his apostles,—"Behold, I send you forth in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore *wise as serpents*, and harmless as doves." And a very slight attention to the teachings of the Bible will show that it speaks of two entirely different kinds of wisdom. St. James says, Epis. iii. 13–17, "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge amongst you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." Here we perceive the opposite characters of these two kinds of wisdom. The one is pure and heavenly, and

produces good fruits—and the other is sensual and devilish, and leads to confusion and every evil work.

Now let the fact be well considered that Moses had declared, before recording the introduction of sin into the world, that the *serpent* was more *subtle*, that is, sly, artful and cunning than any beast of the field. The *serpent* was therefore the fittest emblem that could possibly have been chosen to represent the *deceitfulness* of that earthly and sensual wisdom which has ever been the *tempter* of man, and which originates in the lusts of the flesh. St. Paul speaks of "the old man, which is corrupt according to the *deceitful lusts*." Ephes. iv. 22. None can doubt that our first parents were deceived into transgression through the influence of temptation. And we feel justified in concluding that they were deceived by their own *earthly and sensual lusts*. For, whatever may be said of the immortal and sinless nature of Adam, in his original state, we read that he was made of *the dust of the ground*. He was at first constituted with an *earthly* nature—and in that nature there were earthly feelings and passions that gave birth to sin.

And in view of these simple facts, the following testimony of St. James on the subject of temptation and sin is perfectly intelligible to every capacity:—"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man *is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust*, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death." James i. 13–15. Here is

the very same *tempter* of which Moses speaks under the similitude of a *serpent*—the lusts of the flesh. "*Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed.*" And being made of the dust of the ground, with an earthly nature, Adam felt within him the workings of lust, and yielded to its *deceitful* influence. *And by this one man sin entered into the world.*

St. Paul says, 1st Tim. ii. 14, "The woman being *deceived* was in the transgression." And the nature of that deception which caused our first parents to transgress the command of their Maker, is easily understood. God charged them neither to eat nor to touch the tree in the midst of the garden. Nay, he positively declared of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, "*for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*" To eat of this forbidden tree we believe was to learn the difference between good and evil by actual experience. And God forewarned Adam that in *the very day* that he committed evil he should *surely die.* The threatened death would *certainly* come, and be experienced *immediately.*

What then was the *deceitful* suggestion of the tempter? "Ye shall not *surely* die"—the threatened penalty *may not* be executed—"ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil"—ye shall find a pleasant and desirable fruit, and enjoy happiness in sin—and as ye shall not *surely* die, according to the declaration of God, peradventure you may forever escape the death that has been denounced.

Such was the device of the *tempter*, of which "every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." But God's word

true—and in the very day of transgression Adam experienced the most distressing guilt and fear and shame, and sought to hide himself from the presence of his Maker. *Death* to innocence, and death to sin speedily came upon him, "*For the wages of sin is death,*" and "*to be carnally minded is death.*"

As to the particular *act* that constituted the first offence of man, we have no means by which to determine. All we know is, that it was an act of disobedience against the express command of God. It was, moreover, an act that made man acquainted with *evil*, which he had not known before. And that "first disobedience" was caused by the feelings and appetites and passions with which man was *created.*

But we shall be charged with making God himself the author of sin, because we hold that he created man with that earthly nature and those lustful passions which seduced him into the way of transgression. It is, however, not a little amusing to hear our opposers bring a charge of this kind against us. They surely do not look very far into the nature of things. And let us inquire for a moment how the matter stands in regard to their own creed. They believe that God created a celestial being, who sinned in heaven with no other being to tempt him—and we believe that God created a man, who sinned on earth with no other being to tempt him. And pray, where is the great difference between us with respect to God? Why should *we*, any more than *they* themselves be charged with making God the author of sin? If sin commenced in heaven, it is declared that God had nothing to do with the matter—but when we affirm

that it began *on earth*, and came into the world by one man, we are very gravely charged with ascribing the origin of sin to the Supreme Being himself! A distinction, truly, without a difference—or at least without a difference that is creditable to our accusers! And it strikes our mind that our opposers would do well to explain the difficulty involved in their own doctrine, before they presume to bring any railing accusation against ours!

We hold that God made the first man of the dust of the ground, with a fleshly nature and a mortal constitution—and that the workings of natural lust tempted and enticed Adam to sin. And while we find it expressly declared, Rom. v. 12, that "by one *man* sin entered into the world," we have never yet been able to find a passage of Scripture which ascribes the introduction of sin into the world to any other being or to any other means. The vain conjectures of poetic fancy on this subject, weigh not a feather in the scale against the simple truth taught in the Scriptures, and sanctioned by our own reason.

It was in reference to the ancient Persian doctrine of two creative powers, that the Lord said to Cyrus the Persian King, Isaiah xlv. 7, "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, *and create evil:* I the Lord do all these things." This address was made to the monarch of Persia by the prophet Isaiah, as though spoken by the Lord himself. And if it be wrong to ascribe *the creation of evil* to God, Isaiah was certainly liable to just censure. But we are satisfied that the prophet testified truly—and we are convinced beyond a doubt that there is in the universe but one creative power

which is GOD. Evil or sin was evidently contemplated in the very plan of creation—for the great remedy was provided in the counsels of divine wisdom before the first man was brought into existence. Hence Jesus Christ is called "*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*" It was provided from the very first that he should be the Redeemer and Savior of man. And if sin had not entered into the world, man could never have been the subject of salvation—the whole scheme of redemption would have been utterly unmeaning and without effect—and we could never sing praises to the Lamb for having redeemed us from sin and washed us in his own blood!

We therefore plainly perceive that the introduction of sin into the world was not an *accident*, nor any thing that was not foreseen and known from the beginning. It was necessary to the plan of redemption—for without it there could have been no such thing as redemption. And though we cannot but deplore the reign of sin, we rejoice to believe that God can and will restrain its power—and that he will cause grace and life through Jesus Christ our Lord to abound far beyond all sin and all suffering. It has pleased the Father of our spirits in his deep and unsearchable wisdom to lead us through sufferings of an hour to joys that never end. And in view of the bright revelations of the Gospel concerning the better life that is to come, we may well say in the language of St. Paul:—"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature

waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into *the glorious liberty of the children of God.*" Rom. viii. 18–21.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FALL OF MAN.

We have pursued our general theme only so far as to ascertain the origin and the cause of the first sin in the world. And we shall now proceed to consider what is commonly called "the fall of man." This particular topic seems to come next in order, and is certainly deserving of very careful examination.

We have shown how and by whom sin entered into the world. It entered through the influence of temptation, originating in the lusts of the flesh—and it was committed by *man*. And we are now concerned to ascertain what were the consequences resulting from the first sin of man—or, in other words, to examine the doctrine of "the fall."

The original constitution of man has long been a subject of controversy—and very contradictory opinions in reference thereto are still found to prevail in the world. While some persons hold that man in his primitive state was a perfect and an immortal being, others believe that he was from the beginning subject to vanity and liable to death. And it is of the utmost importance that we should obtain a just understanding of what man was at first—and that we should ascertain what changes, if any, were wrought in his nature and constitution by the influence of sin. These particulars may be

regarded as holding an intimate connexion with the objects of the Messiah's mediations, and as having an important bearing upon the whole Scripture doctrine of salvation. And a missapprehension in regard to the actual condition in which sin has involved our race, may mislead the mind on almost every subject of revealed truth.

Now notwithstanding all that has been said and written about "the fall of man," and the widely different opinions that are held on this subject, we cannot but think that the whole matter, when properly divested of all fanciful and unauthorized conjectures, will be found perfectly plain and easy to be understood. And though it may be thought uncharitable, we are well persuaded that, to the influence of venerated human creeds, and the proneness of man to follow in the footsteps of his fathers, and to support whatever is generally approved, may be traced the gross errors and glaring absurdities that now prevail in regard to this very simple subject. These false notions are held by those who seem to think freely and correctly in reference to most other things. And while we hope ever to bow with becoming submission to the authority of God's word, we desire to lend our aid, however feeble may be our efforts, to bring men into the free exercise of reason and candor in the investigation of religious truth.

Let it not be supposed, however, from what has been said, that we are prepared to defend all the notions that were peculiar to the Pelagians of old But we are not in the least terrified by the name— nor do we fear to embrace and avow any truth because it is taught by such as have long been

pronounced heretics. We are not ashamed to express the belief that that ancient and much despised sect held correct views relative to the original nature and constitution of man. They believed that Adam was by nature mortal—and that all new-born infants are in the same condition in which he lived before he had sinned. And if their doctrine on this subject had been opposed with no other weapons than such as are supplied by reason and Scripture, we think it fair to conclude that it would have been permanently established in the days of Pelagius himself. But being an innovation upon popular belief, it found no favor in the eyes of the ruling powers, but was soon suppressed by the edicts of councils and the terrors of penal enactments. There was not independence enough in the world to maintain an unpopular doctrine, known to be compatible with reason, and sanctioned by the high authority of divine truth. Ignorance and prejudice ignobly triumphed—and the arbitrary decisions of popes and their pliant allies, protected an error, which, without their aid, would have died in its infancy!

In later times, and where human authority is not exercised to the same extent in matters of religious belief, there are still found in operation sufficient causes to perpetuate the gross errors of darker ages. The portraiture of too many theologians is exhibited in the character and conduct of the celebrated Dr. PALEY, of whom his biographer has said, "Through the whole course of his life, Dr. Paley seemed too willing to support established doctrines; and to find plausible reasons for existing institutions; even in cases in which he must have felt

those doctrines to be at variance with truth, and those institutions in opposition to the best interests of mankind. His great and vigorous mind ought to have disdained the paltry subterfuges of disengenuous subtlety, and interested sophistication."

We fear that these censures, though very severe, find a just application in the case of more doctors than one. Excommunication, with the loss of high honors and great emolument, has been threatened the man who dares to dissent from the established doctrine of the Church concerning man's original perfection and holiness, and his entire corruption by "the fall." And too many, alas! seem willing to support doctrines known "to be at variance with truth," rather than forfeit their high standing in the church, and the profits of their calling. Hence the worst forms of error are easily perpetuated when they once become well established—and however feebly they may be supported, they are extremely difficult to be eradicated.—Paley, dreading the loss of patronage, advocated the eternity of punishment for sin, which he did not believe—and we fear that many others, in imitation of his unworthy example, have concealed their light under a bushel, and willingly sanctioned the time-honored errors of human creeds.—But we need not pursue this train of thought.

In what is commonly called "the fall of man," we are free to confess that we have no more faith than we have in the Koran of Mahomet or the pretended revelations of the Book of Mormon! And though we desire ever to cherish a decent and becoming respect for our opposers and their doctrine, we still claim the right of speaking in lan-

ge that may be understood. We have no creed an's device for our guide—and we feel perly free to examine the subject before us in the of reason and of Scripture truth. We believe the nature of man—moral and physical—is the e now as it was when the progenitor of our came from the forming hand of his Creator, breathed the freshness of that spirit which conted him "a living soul." And our reasons for believing will be given as we proceed.

ut it seems proper that we should here exhibit r statement of the common doctrine of "the ." It is believed, then, that the entire nature and titution of man underwent a radical transforon in consequence of the first sin of our first nts. And that we may not be suspected of epresenting the belief of our opposers in doc-, we shall quote from acknowledged authority. he latest and amended edition of the Westster Assembly's Catechism, which is now in force, and which may be considered as ranking ng the highest of human authorities, we find following question and answer:—"Q. Wherein ists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man

A. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man consists in *the guilt of Adam's first sin, the t of original righteousness, and the corruption is whole nature,* which is commonly called origisin; together with all actual transgressions which eed from it." It is also stated in other creeds, the belief is quite common, that "the fall" des "the loss of those *perfections* and that happss which man received at his creation." And resenting the evidences by which this doctrine

is thought to be sustained, BUCK thus eloquently but fancifully discourses: "*For that man is a fallen creature*, is evident, if we consider his misery as an inhabitant of the natural world—the disorders of the globe we inhabit, and the dreadful scourges with which it is visited—the deplorable and shocking circumstances of our birth—our natural uncleanness, helplessness, ignorance, and nakedness—the gross darkness in which we naturally are both with respect to God and a future state—the general rebellion of the brute creation against us—the various poisons that lurk in the animal, vegetable, and mineral world, ready to destroy us—the heavy curse of toil and sweat to which we are liable—the innumerable calamities of life, and the pangs of death." And even CALMET, with all his characteristic moderation and good sense, speaks of Adam's *blood* being poisoned by sin!

Now in view of the doctrine of "the fall," as thus stated, let us turn our attention to the Scriptures and see what lesson they teach on this subject. St. Paul says, Rom. viii. 20, "For the creature was *made* subject to vanity." And having been thus created, man was from the beginning liable to deception and to sin, as the history of Adam abundantly proves, and as we shall yet plainly show. And it will also appear, as we have before stated, that man was originally intended to be the creature of *hope* in this world, looking forward to "a better country, even a heavenly." A slight examination of the connexion of the passage before us, will show that by *the creature* the apostle means the same as by "the whole creation".

in a subsequent verse. Indeed the expressions are the same in the original text. And to our mind it obviously appears that the writer treats of *the original creation of man*, and not of something that subsequently happened. That he speaks of the creation of *man*, and not of some other order of beings, is too evident to admit of reasonable doubt. For the very same creature that was made subject to vanity, was also made the subject of *hope*—and the reason assigned is "because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the *children* of God."

And that man was not thus subjected to vanity by reason of his own choice, or on account of any doings of his own, is sufficiently proved by the declaration, "For the creature was made subject to vanity, *not willingly*." It was not a matter of choice on the part of man—for he could have had no volition before he was created—but it was done by that great and good Being who has encouraged us to *hope* that we shall at last be delivered from this state of vanity, and from all the corruptions and sufferings of mortality!

But it has been maintained that man in his primitive state was an *immortal*, a *perfect* and a *holy* being. Now if this position were admitted, the common notion of the fall would be most easily sustained. For if such was the original state of man, the fact is perfectly clear that he has greatly degenerated from his primeval exaltation and perfection. Only grant a man all his premises, and but a small measure of ability is needed to establish any conclusion that he may desire. But we

fault the premises—and we here demand proof that has never yet been furnished. And unless it can be shown that man was at first *immortal* and *perfect* and *holy*, it is idle and preposterous to assert that he has *fallen* from his original nature—and then to refer to his present *mortality*, *imperfection* and *sinfulness* in proof of the fact.

TACITUS, the Roman historian, says, "In the early ages of the world, men led a life of innocence and simplicity. Free from irregular passions, they knew no corruption of manners; and void of guilt, they had no need of laws. In the natural emotions of the heart they found incentives to virtue, and rewards were unnecessary. Having no inordinate desires, they coveted nothing, and pains and penalties were unknown." This is indeed a very beautiful picture—but it happens to be nothing more than imagination. And the translator of Tacitus has well said in a note,—"It may be made a question, whether a period of pure simplicity and innocence ever existed. Seneca expatiates in praise of those times, and the poets have been lavish in their description of the golden age; but the history of mankind has no proofs of the fact. An ingenious writer says, who were those men that lived in so much innocence? The first man who was born into the world, killed the second. *When did the times of simplicity begin?*" And we may go back one step farther, and say, the first man that ever lived in the world, exhibited the imperfection of his nature in the very act of sinning. *When did the perfection and immaculate holiness of human nature begin?*

The ancient Persians held notions very similar

to those of Tacitus in regard to the primitive nature of man. In stating their belief, GIBBON thus speaks:—"The wise benevolence of Ormusd [the good God] formed man capable of virtue, and abundantly provided his fair habitation with the materials of happiness. By his vigilant providence, the motion of the planets, the order of the seasons, and the temperate mixture of the elements, are preserved. But the malice of Ahriman [the evil God] has long since pierced Ormusd's egg; or in other words, has violated the harmony of his works. Since that fatal irruption, the most minute articles of poison spring up amidst the most salutary plants; deluges, earthquakes, and conflagrations, attest the conflict of Nature, and the little world of man is perpetually shaken by vice and misfortune."

Such opinions were common among benighted Pagans. And all have heard of PANDORA, the first woman, according to Grecian Mythology, who suffered her fatal box to be opened, when "there issued from it a multitude of evils and distempers, which dispersed themselves all over the world, and which, from that fatal moment, have not ceased to afflict the human race." All this has doubtless been believed. And the candid thinker and close observer is not ignorant of the fact that notions of a very similar character are still regarded by many persons as the teachings of divine truth.

But when we take our leave of mere fables and legends, and direct our attention to the Scriptures, do we really find any thing of the kind there stated—any thing to justify the belief that the first man of our race was created *immortal* and *perfect*, but became mortal and imperfect by sin? We know

of but one passage that even *seems* to favor such a supposition—and the proof which that passage affords is surely of a very questionable character. Speaking of the difficulty of understanding all the devices of the human heart, Solomon says, Eccles. vii. 29, "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man *upright;* but they have sought out many inventions." Now it must certainly require a very keen perception, such as we dare not boast, to find in this place any proof that the whole nature of man was radically changed on account of Adam's "first disobedience." If seeking out *inventions* means a change of human nature, we should be led to conclude that our poor nature must have undergone a great many transformations since the days of Adam!

Man was made upright and innocent, though *subject to vanity*—and after coming to the knowledge of good and evil, he sought out many and various kinds of inventions. But we find nothing here to countenance the common notion of "the fall." And indeed we find that Dr. CLARKE has frankly said of this passage,—"I doubt much whether the word [here rendered *inventions*] should be taken in a *bad* sense. It may signify the whole of human *devices, imaginations, inventions, artifice,* with all their products," &c.

But we shall be told that Adam was created in the *image* of his Maker, and must therefore have been in his original state both immortal and perfect. However conclusive this argument may appear to others, we are unable to perceive that it has any force whatever. Though Adam was thus created, it does not necessarily follow that he had

any pre-eminence in this respect above his posterity in general. As late as the apostle James, when the whole world lay in sin and wickedness, it was declared that men "*are* made after the *similitude* of God." James iii. 9. And if being made in the likeness of God did not constitute man perfect and immortal when this inspired apostle wrote, neither did it when Adam was created!

Besides, supposing our first parents to have been created *perfect* and holy, what possible influence could temptation of any kind have exerted over their minds? They were tempted and caused to sin through the power of deception. "The woman being *deceived* was in the transgression." But how or by what means *perfect* beings could be *deceived* is not easily imagined—and surely the fact itself affords but sorry proof of *perfection!*

We therefore see the strange difficulties in which the common notion of "the fall" is involved. And we at once perceive that the very act of sinning was the strongest evidence that Adam could possibly have given of the *imperfection* and the *peccability* of his original nature. With this fact in view, nothing could exceed the extravagance and absurdity of the supposition that Adam was created an *immortal* and a *perfect* being. Nothing of the kind is stated in the divine record—and surely the history of man should lead to any other conclusion!

Let us now candidly inquire as to what alteration was really effected in the moral constitution of man by "the fall." That he was in his original state susceptible of being *tempted*, and of *sinning*, too, was fully demonstrated by the memora-

ble event in the garden of Eden. And it is furthermore evident that God knew from the beginning that man was *liable* to sin—else why the prohibition? If Adam had not been *created* subject to vanity, and susceptible from the first of being deceived into transgression, why was he warned against the influence of evil? That he was *exposed* to sin, is too manifest to require proof. And it is equally plain and certain that in his original state he was possessed of no holiness or perfection that secured him against sinning!

It appears from the account recorded in Genesis that Adam was not unlike his posterity in all subsequent times. He was tempted, and he yielded to the influence of temptation. And who need be told that such has ever been the case, and still continues? It does not seem that Adam was any more impeccable than mankind in general. We have no account of his having withstood the power of temptation for a long season, or for any time. On the contrary, he seems to have yielded to the very first that ever appeared to his mind.

And in view of these considerations, it does really appear to us that Adam fell far more short of perfection than some of his posterity. He sinfully yielded to the very first dictate of the tempter—while Joseph resisted the power of evil, and maintained his virtue and innocence to the last. And yet, by a sort of logic, peculiar to religious errorists, we are gravely told that the former was created a *perfect* and *holy* being, but that the latter came into the world in a state of total depravity If this notion be indeed true, who can deny that a state of utter corruption is vastly preferable to the "*original* righteousness" of man?

But the sober fact is, that when we search the whole record of divine truth, we find nothing to contradict the statement of St. Paul, that man was made subject to vanity—and that his moral as well as his physical nature is therefore the same now as it was when the spirit of God first inspired him with life! And we have no more reason for supposing that *human nature* was changed for the worse by the sin of Adam, than we have for supposing that it was changed for the better by *the righteousnes of Abel!*

We are aware that it is quite common to speak of the heavy and awful *curse* that fell upon our race on account of the first man's disobedience. And this curse is declared to include all the miseries of this life, death itself, and the pains of hell forever! But it may be well to inquire whether the Scriptures furnish any proof sufficient to warrant an opinion at once so monstrous and unreasonable. We find that the serpent was cursed, and so was the ground cursed for man's sake. And that part of the "curse" which relates directly to man, was expressed in these words:—cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

Now as the very utmost extent of this denunciation was *till man should "return unto the ground,"* we need not attempt to show that "the pains of hell" beyond death formed no part of the threatened

penalty. And we are well convinced that very gross errors prevail in regard to the heavy malediction that came upon man even in this life. Is it a real *curse* for man to till the ground, and to gain his living by the sweat of his brow? Were we not intended for exertion? And do not our health and happiness depend upon the proper exercise of our natural powers? If then, when the human race began to multiply, the ground had not been *so cursed* as no longer to yield of itself sufficient sustenance for the support of life, the curse upon man would have been far greater! Our race began to increase as soon as sin entered into the world—and it therefore became necessary that bread should be obtained by labor and toil. Thorns and thistles and other natural evils had to be encountered—and so long as man bears an earthly constitution, and is subject to vanity, sin and suffering will be his unavoidable lot. The "*curse,*" as it is called, seems to be inseparably connected with the established course of things in this world. Man can enjoy no perfection here—this is not the state in which the full perfection of his nature is to be developed—for here he is the creature of *hope.* Here there can be no entire freedom from toil and sorrow—for the place of the spirit's peaceful rest is beyond the bounds of mortality in the home of the blessed. Toil and pain continue until the earthly race is run. And then man returns to the dust of the ground, *because* he was taken out of the ground—and the spirit returns unto God *because* it came from him.

In view of this brief and imperfect consideration of the doctrine of "the fall," we think the conclu-

sion cannot reasonably be avoided, that St. Paul spoke the truth when he declared that "the creature was *made subject* to vanity." In his primitive state, Adam was *innocent* before God, though he was neither immortal nor perfect—and he maintained his innocency until he sinned. The same is true of his posterity. And our Savior most plainly recognized the perfect *innocency* of little children, who had not come to the knowledge of good and evil, when he took them in his arms and blessed them, and declared that of such is the kingdom of heaven! They were in a state of simple nature—the very same, indeed, in which Adam lived before he sinned, and thus lost his native innocency.

The first man, though the spirit of God was breathed into him, was still made of the dust of the ground—and though the inner man was an emanation from above, there were still earthly feelings and passions in his nature. And yielding to the influence of earth-born propensities, he was deceived and slain of sin. "For the flesh (says an apostle) lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." It is from this warfare of conflicting feelings and powers in our nature, that sin always has been and still is produced. And the great duty of man, as made known in the Gospel of Christ, is, to "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts"—to restrain and subdue the power of earthly and sensual feelings—to cherish and strengthen the purer and better principles of our nature—and to live and act in obedience to "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus."

In concluding this part of our labor, it may be well to remark that great as the evil of sin certainly is, it did not come by accident—nor was it permitted to enter into the world without a wise and gracious purpose on the part of him who does all things right. On this important subject the apostle Paul speaks as follows:—"Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." We here learn that the introduction of sin into the world, and its reigning unto death, afforded an opportunity and caused the necessity for the exercise of divine mercy and grace in delivering the whole creation from the bondage of corruption unto the glorious liberty of the children of God!

The music of heaven will be the song of *redemption* through the blood of the Lamb. That glad song of triumph and joy could never be sung, if man had never sinned. The whole plan of redemption would have been without effect—and the Lamb of God, *slain from the foundation of the world*, would have bled and died in vain. But all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. And when the great work of justification unto life by the grace of God manifested through the Redeemer, shall have been finished, the full jubilee of the whole creation shall be heard in the courts of the Lord, and the happiness of heaven shall be perfect!

CHAPTER VII.

RETRIBUTION UNDER THE OLD TESTAMENT DISPENSATION.

The subject upon which we are now about to enter covers a vast extent—and instead of being obliged to seek for topics of discourse, we are required to select from a great multiplicity. We propose to glance at the character and operations of the Divine Government through the whole period of the Old Testament Dispensation, particularly in reference to the rewards and punishments that were administered by the Supreme Ruler during that time. We shall aim at nothing more than a general view of the subject. And though it extends through a long duration, and relates to the execution of retributive justice under a great variety of circumstances, we think it will not be questioned that God's government was administered upon the same principles, and that rewards and punishments were of the same general character from the days of Adam to the times of the Messiah.

It is freely granted that during this long period different institutions were established, according to the progress and wants of man. But none will undertake to maintain that any change took place, either in the principles of the divine economy, or in the nature and duration of recompense for

human conduct. We are to inquire what motives to virtue and what dissuasives from vice were presented before the minds of men in the word and dealings of God in the olden time—and to ascertain, if possible, whether rewards and punishments were administered in the present life, or reserved for the future world. And though a very wide field is thus spread out before us, we hope to be able to present a few positive declarations and to refer to several examples of retribution, that will sufficiently explain the nature and character of the whole subject.

Under the dispensation of the Old Testament God was recognized as the Ruler and Lawgiver and Judge of the people—and his whole government was a *Theocracy*. His regal character was displayed in the authority which he maintained and directly exercised over the concerns of nations and the affairs of individuals. He was the King, and men were the subjects of his reign. As the Lawgiver, he announced the rules by which men were obliged to govern their actions. And as the Supreme Judge, he awarded the deserts of righteousness, and executed the penalties of sin. Whatever blessings resulted from faithfulness and duty, were believed to proceed directly from the divine hand—and whatever evils were endured by reason of transgression, were regarded as the sensible manifestations of God's displeasure.

Nor was any material change effected with respect to these things by the appointment of Judges, and subsequently of Kings, in Israel. These several officers stood in the capacity of God's vicegerants upon earth. And although they declared

his will, enforced his authority, and executed the requisitions of his justice, He was still the King, the Lawgiver and the Judge. The same Theocracy was continued from the first man who was created, down to the last of the prophets. And as to the age of darkness between Malachi and the Baptist, nothing need be said.

Now that God exercised his regal authority during the whole time of which we speak, will not be denied. The fact is also freely admitted that in the course of the same dispensation he fully displayed himself in the character of a Lawgiver. And shall we suppose that his *judicial* work was left undone, and deferred to a future and far distant period? Did he publish his commands as the Supreme Lawgiver and King, and yet as the *Judge* of all the earth fail to *execute* the justice of his law?

It has been asserted with very great positiveness that the Sovereign Judge pronounced his righteous *decisions* upon the conduct of men in ancient times—but reserved the full rewards of virtue and the awful penalties of sin to be administered at a distant time and in a future world. But we have never yet been favored with any proof that seems sufficient to warrant this assertion. The Scriptures manifestly declare that while God gave laws to his people, he also *executed* his righteous judgments. The Psalmist not only said, "Verily he is a God that *judgeth in the earth*," but he also declared, "The Lord is known by the judgment which he *executeth*." And we feel fully justified by these and other passages of like meaning, to conclude that under the Old Testament dispensation, God was as fully displayed in his *judicial*

character, as he was in giving laws to his people and in governing the nations upon earth.

The simple fact declared by Moses, Deut. xxxii. 4, should be kept constantly in view in the consideration of our subject—"*For all his ways are judgment.*" In all God's dealings with mankind since the beginning of the world, *judgment* has formed an important branch of his general administration. Man, in every condition of life, and under all possible circumstances, has ever been subject to the operations and influences of certain and invariable laws. Adam, commencing the course of life without the experience of infancy and childhood, was at once made acquainted with an express commandment of his Maker. *His* violation of the law to which all stand amenable, differed, therefore, in one respect, from the transgressions of his immediate descendants. *He* disobeyed a law which was declared in words—and *they* were unfaithful to the law of their own understanding. But they all, without exception, experienced the judgments of the same just and righteous Ruler. St. Paul speaks very plainly on this subject, Rom. v, where he says, "For until the law, (that is, the law of Moses,) sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. *Nevertheless*, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come."

A knowledge of God's revealed law increases the obligations of duty imposed upon man by natural reason and conscience. Where this law is not known, sin is not imputed in the same manner and to the

same extent, as where it has been revealed. From Adam to Moses, no man *could* sin after the similitude or likeness of Adam's transgression—because *he* received an express command from God, and no such law was given to the rest of mankind during that period. *Nevertheless*, the natural fruits or the just consequences of human actions, were still experienced. Moral or spiritual death, ever the certain result of evil doing, reigned from the time of the first man to the lawgiver of Israel, the same as after the memorable code was received from the Arabian Mount. *For all God's ways are judgment.*

All men, we repeat, in every condition of life, are the subjects of law. There has ever been a natural and a necessary connexion between the actions of man and their equitable results as declared in the Scriptures. And one of the most mischievous and dangerous errors that have ever prevailed, is the supposition that in *this world* God merely watches our doings, and records our deeds in the book of his remembrance, and will *in the future world* reward and punish us,—and not even there according to our general character and conduct in life, *but according to the last act of our mortal being*. Thus it is denied that God's ways are judgment in this world—while it is believed that the rewards of virtue may be lost, the punishments of sin eluded, and the righteous ends of the divine government effectually defeated.

To the influence of this fatal error in some of its forms, may be ascribed a vast proportion of the sins and consequent sufferings of the world. It throws a blinding deception over the human mind

and while it obscures all the loveliness and beauty of virture, it gilds vice with every false and deceptive charm. It lurks like an evil genius in the breast of every man who fancies that he can sin with impunity, and find real happiness in a course of disobedience to God. And we earnestly desire, according to the measure of our ability, to correct this dangerous mistake, and to convince the world that all God's ways are judgment.

We have one word more to offer before we proceed. The subject of our present inquiry, if properly considered, will shed much light upon the retributions of divine justice as declared in the Christian revelation. The Gospel is expressly pronounced a new and *better* covenant than the old, because "*established upon better promises.*" And after we shall have ascertained what were the nature and duration of recompense under the old dispensation, we may safely assume that nothing less merciful in God, or less favorable to the happiness of man, is revealed in that glorious GOSPEL of the blessed God, which proclaims good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all people!

The first case of retribution recorded in the Scriptures is that in which the progenitor of our race was the subject of God's dealings. Created in innocency, and supplied with the means of subsistence and of happiness, Adam was allowed freely to enjoy all the blessings of the earth, while he was strictly forbidden to seek a knowledge of good and evil by the commission of sin. The simple law instituted for his government was very express in its provisions—and the penalty in case of disobedience was unequivocally declared. And, aside

from all the wild and fanciful conjectures that have been indulged on this subject, there seems to be no reasonable ground for controversy touching the intent of the law, and the nature and extent of the penalty denounced. "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. ii. 16, 17.

We shall venture no opinion concerning the *garden* and the *trees* here mentioned. Nor shall we puzzle ourselves to settle the question as to the precise act that constituted "the first disobedience of Adam. The garden doubtless represents man's original *innocence*, and by his partaking of the forbidden fruit is meant that he transgressed the command of his Maker. And whatever might have been the *act* committed, it cannot affect the nature of our subject.

But there are two questions which here seem to demand our particular attention.

1st. What was the declared penalty of Adam's disobedience? The divine record gives the simple answer—it was *death*. So far as this plain matter of fact is concerned, a perfect concurrence of belief is found to prevail among all Christian people. But when we come to explain the extent of meaning expressed, and the nature and duration of the punishment signified by the term *death*, we ascertain that the most discordant and contradictory opinions are entertained. The more common notion in our day is, that this simple word embraced nothing less than a threefold death—that is, spirit-

ual, temporal, and eternal death—or, in other words, "all the miseries of this life, death itself, and the pains of hell forever." But is it supposible that any thinking man will seriously contend that any thing of the kind is really stated in the history of Adam? We think all candid persons must admit that this notion, however sincerely believed, is susceptible of no positive Scripture proof. And if any person has authority to affirm that *three* deaths were intended when but *one* was expressed, why may we not with equal propriety assert that a still greater number was meant?

We have never yet heard one creditable argument to prove that *all* the miseries of this life (to say nothing of any other) are the penalties of sin. That sin in some form is the cause of all the moral disorders of the world, we shall not attempt to deny. But we hold that there are evils and sufferings necessarily connected with our earthly existence and our mortal constitution, which do not proceed from any violations of the moral law of God. And we find that when our Savior was questioned in regard to a certain case of *blindness*, and asked, "Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? he answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." Here was a great evil that did not result from sin, either in the parents or in the child—but it came in the established course of God's wise and mysterious providence. It is therefore not true that all the miseries of this life are *the inflictions of retributive justice.*

And as to "eternal death," we are quite confi

dent that such a thing is not once named in any part of the Bible—nor has any expression of equivalent meaning ever yet been found in the sacred volume. This part of the subject may therefore be dismissed without another word.

Leaving the subject of temporal death for the present, for reasons that will hereafter appear, the whole matter is now brought down to simple moral or spiritual death. And such, we firmly believe, was the full penalty of Adam's disobedience. This opinion is well sanctioned by the Scripture usage of the word *death.* When Moses gave commandments to the children of Isarel, and set before them the evils that would befall them *in the land* to which they journeyed, in case of transgression, he assured them that he had thus set *death* before them. St. Paul speaks to the Corinthians of their having been delivered from *death*—and he also testifies that "to be carnally minded *is death,*" and, "the wages of sin *is death.*" Such testimony could be greatly multiplied—but it seems unnecessary. *Death* to innocence—*death* in sin—and all the pangs of guilt and the keen stings of conscience, were denounced as the penalty of transgression in the garden of Eden.

2d. *When* was the penalty of Adam's disobedience to be executed? Here again the simple history of the man furnishes a very plain answer. It was *in the day of his transgression.* This declaration of God himself gives the strongest confirmation to the opinion which we have already expressed—namely, that spiritual or moral death covered the entire ground of the denunciation. And it very clearly proves that even temporal death—to

say nothing of ceaseless woes in the future world—formed no part of the threatened penalty. Natural death is the necessary result of our earthly nature and a mortal constitution—while moral or spiritual death is the effect of sin. And that this latter death was the penalty of Adam's disobedience, is conclusively proved by the fact that he experienced it, according to the sure word of God, *in the day of transgression*—and yet afterwards continued to live many years as an inhabitant of the earth!

It is therefore easily perceived that the threatening declared to Adam did not extend beyond the period of his natural lifetime. The very farthest extent of the curse denounced against him after he had transgressed, was *till he should return unto the ground*, out of which he was taken! And if this man's retribution was thus limited by the express declaration of God, we have no authority, nay, we positively contradict the divine testimony when we assert, that any other motives were presented to his mind "to pursue the good and to avoid the evil, than those which were derived from the rewards and punishments of this life."

Let us now briefly notice the next case of retribution that appears in the history of our race. The hands of Cain were stained with the blood of murdered innocence. And for the horrid crime of slaying his brother—his only brother—he was doomed to a fearful punishment that caused him to exclaim in the bitterness of his grief, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." That atrocious act was committed without provocation, and with the most shocking and revolting cruelty. There was no circumstance connected with all that terrible

tragedy to extenuate the guilt of the deliberate and cold-blooded murderer. The long and black catalogue of crimes from his day to the present time may be diligently searched, and a more deeply malicious act cannot be found on record!

And what was the awful penalty denounced in this case? Who dare affirm that Cain, with his hands stained with the blood of a brother, was sentenced to any other retribution than that which was endured in this world?

Let it be well understood that the question before us is not—what amount of punishment did Cain deserve?—or what kind and degree of retribution would have produced the most salutary results upon mankind in after ages? With these questions we have now no concern whatever—they have nothing to do with the subject before us. If any person desires to speculate in regard to these things, and to give his opinion to the world, we have no objections to offer. But the only proper question now before us, is, what say the Scriptures touching the doom of Cain for his wickedness? And here is the answer:—"And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. *A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.*" Such was the very extent of the whole denunciation. And whatever opinions may be held on this subject—whatever alarming outcry may be raised about demoralizing doctrines—and whatever loud and daring assertions may be made in regard to the just doom of the murderer—we may safely

defy any man living to prove by the Scriptures that Cain was adjudged of God to any penal sufferings beyond his natural lifetime!

We shall devote the remainder of the present chapter to a consideration of the case of the Antediluvians and the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, whom God drowned in the flood and destroyed by fire from heaven. We include these two judgments in one, because of their manifest similarity of character, and because what we have to say of one will be found alike applicable to the other.

The inhabitants of the old world corrupted their way before the Lord, and at last became so exceedingly wicked, that they were swept from the earth by a terrible judgment from Heaven—and the same was afterwards the case with reference to the dwellers in the cities of the plain. And while Noah and his household were saved from the general deluge as a mark of divine favor, Lot was delivered from the judgment on Sodom as a recompense for his righteousness before the Lord. The history of those wicked people ends with the account of their death—and the judgment which God executed in their destruction from the earth was *the last judgment* concerning them of which we find any record in the Scriptures. Of the Antediluvians God said, "I will *destroy* man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth." And of the cities of the plain, we read Gen. xix. 24, 25, "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom, and upon Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground."

We may remark, in this place, that the ground upon which the cities of the plain stood, being filled with bitumen, continued to burn long after the cities were destroyed—and it has been affirmed by travellers and historians that even as late as the times of the apostles, and afterwards, "smoke and small flame did sometimes break out." The long continuance of this fire led St. Jude to call it "eternal fire." But the learned *Gilpin*, as cited by Paige, has truly said, "The apostle cannot well mean *future punishments*, because he mentions it as a *deigma*—something that was to be a *visible example* to all. That word deriving from *deiknumia*, to *show*, or *exhibit*, properly signifies to *give a sample of something to be sold.*" And because Jude spoke of a *visible monument on eauth* of the ancient and terrible judgment that befell the cities of the plain, it by no means follows that the subjects of that judgment were doomed to lasting and merciless woes in the future and unseen world!

But here we shall be met with the old and oft-repeated objection that if the doctrine which we hold be true, the Antediluvians and the people of Sodom and Gomorrah fared far better than righteous Noah and Lot—inasmuch as the former were taken immediately to heaven, while the latter were left behind to endure all the evils and to buffet all the tempests of life. Now we have not a word to say about the particular condition of those wicked rebels immediately after death. And when we are directly and earnestly questioned in regard to their *final* estate, we can only answer, according to the Scriptures, that they shall be made alive in Christ: "For as in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ shall *all*

be made alive." But our doctrine does not oblige us to believe that those wicked people accelerated their progress to heaven by the commission of sin. This is what our opposers have labored hard to charge upon us—but we have never avowed nor *believed* any thing of the kind. But we do believe, as the Scriptures testify, that Christ was *the first fruits* of those who slept, 1st Cor. xv. 20, and *the first begotton of the dead.* Rev. 1. 5. And we therefore deny that the wicked people of whom we speak had entered into heaven, or were made alive in Christ, even when the great *forerunner* of all ascended as the *first* who rose from the dead to die no more!

The objector, let it be noticed, seems to consider *life* in itself as an *evil,* and death as a *deliverance* from this evil—for he supposes that if there be no dreadful sufferings beyond mortality, the Antediluvians and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were very highly favored in being removed from the earth, while righteous Noah and Lot were left behind to bear all the ills of this life! But if this reasoning be correct, how shall we reconcile the justice and the mercy of God with the *fact* that these good and holy men were *not* swept off in the general destruction, *instead* of being left behind to linger out a miserable existence in this vale of tears? Surely *they* would have gone safely, whatever might have been the fate of the wicked. And if *death,* without exposure to future misery, *was no punishment, but a blessing,* why was this *blessing* withheld from righteous Noah and Lot? But it should be well understood that the Scriptures consider *life* as the greatest of all blessings, and

premature and violent death as the most awful *punishment.* And one Scripture declaration weighs more with us in a matter of this kind than a thousand groundless opinions and as many naked assertions.

Let us here bring into view a few of the many proofs of what we have said in regard to *life* and premature *death.* The Psalmist represents God as saying of "the man that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High," "*With long life* will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation." And again, "But thou, O God, shalt bring them down to destruction: *bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.*" And Solomon says of wisdom "*Length of days is in her right hand.*" "Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings, *and the years of thy life shall be many.*" "*The wicked shall be cut off from the earth,* and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it." "*The years of the wicked shall be shortened.*"

The Scriptures abound with such declarations. They could be furnished to almost any number, but it seems useless to give any more. Now whether life is really a blessing, or not, is a question with which we have no concern in this place—though we are fully convinced that our Savior testified truly when he said, "for all that a man hath will he give for his life." It is certain that the Scriptures consider life a blessing. And this fact is quite sufficient for our present purpose. And let it be carefully noticed and well remembered, that the good man was not promised a speedy departure from this world to the enjoyment of blessedness in eternity—but *long life on earth!* Neither was the wicked man

threatened with a lengthened existence in this world of sin and sorrow, and a merciless curse to follow hereafter—but with being *cut off from the earth!*

Let us now introduce two individual cases in which the prolongation of human life was received as a direct *blessing* from God. We are informed, 2d Kings, xx, that King Hezekiah became sick unto death—but that because he had walked before God in truth, and with a perfect heart, and had done that which was right in his sight, the Lord said unto him, "Behold, I will heal thee; on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord. *And I will add unto thy days fifteen years.*" Now no one can suppose that this righteous man would have passed into a state of misery beyond death, if he had died of this sickness. Still his life was prolonged fifteen years as a reward for his great piety! And every discerning person can at once perceive that in like manner Noah and Lot were preserved alive, while their wicked and ungodly neighbors were swept from the earth as a judgment for their sins!

Again, St. Paul says in his Epistle to the Philippians, "Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labor, and fellow-soldier. * * * For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: *but God had mercy on him;* and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow." Now all will most freely admit that this good and righteous man would certainly have gone to heaven if he had died of this sickness. And yet the apostle declares that God had *mercy on him* in not permitting him to die! That is, according to the objector's notion, Epa-

phroditus was fully prepared for heaven, but God was so merciful and kind towards him that he would not suffer him to depart—but graciously doomed him to tarry still longer in this evil world!

In view of the foregoing considerations it is easy to understand how the Antediluvians and the people of Sodom and Gomorrah could be punished for their sins, without being made the hapless victims of furious and merciless curses in the future world. They were cut off from the earth as a punishment for their sins, while Noah and Lot were left to enjoy the blessings of life. The former died under *the judgments of God*—and the latter lived out the full period of mortal existence, and died the death of the righteous.

But we shall be told that if a man is deprived of his life as a judgment from God, and suffers no penalty after he is dead, his premature death cannot be considered as a punishment for sin. This assumption, however, is disproved by facts. None believe that Moses and Aaron, the ancient servants of God, departed out of this world into a state of ceaseless woe—and yet they both died as a judgment from God, *because they had transgressed against him.* It is stated in Deut. xxxii. 2, that Moses was commanded to ascend Mount Nebo and there *die*, as his brother Aaron had died in Mount Hor,—"*because ye transgressed against me among the children of Israel.*" And if *dying for sin* as a judgment from God, proves the endless punishment of the Antediluvians and of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, why does it not equally prove the same doom for Moses and Aaron? But it is contended that the mere fact that the for-

mer suffered death as a judgment from God, proves their endless suffering—and yet it is supposed that in regard to the latter the same fact does not prove that they suffered one moment after death! We confess that we have no liking for *such* consistency in argument!

The reader will recollect that Abraham plead with God to spare the *lives* of the men of Sodom and Gomorrah. A wise man never overlooks the greater calamity, while he weeps and mourns over one of less magnitude. And if those ungodly people were really plunged into a state of interminable wretchedness, what are we to think of Abraham for pleading that their *lives* might be spared, and yet manifesting no manner of concern about the salvation of their immortal souls from endless misery? The only fair and just conclusion is, that he prayed for the deliverance of the people from the greatest evil to which they were exposed—and that evil actually came upon them in their utter destruction from the earth!

Every body will freely grant that there can be no *greater* punishment than that of endless misery. Such being the fact, if we can prove by direct and incontrovertible testimony, that any people ever suffered a *greater* punishment than that of the men of Sodom, it will follow of necessity that *their* retribution was something *less* than endless torment, to say the least. Hear then what the word of the Lord has said in reference even to the *temporal* calamities that were to befall the people of Israel. Lam. iv. 6, "For the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is *greater* (mark the expression) is GREATER than the pun

ishment of the sin of Sodom, that was overthrown as in a moment, and no hands stayed on her." From this passage it is perfectly obvious, not merely that the cities of the plain suffered merely temporal punishment, but also that *greater* evils than they endured were to be experienced, and that too in the present life. *They* perished as in a moment, and no hands stayed on them—while the people of Israel were subjected to the most severe and protracted sufferings. And hence we find that our Savior, in speaking of the terrible overthrow of Jerusalem, declared that then there should be a time of trouble such as never had been from the beginning of the world, and such as shall never be known again!

The most then that we are authorized by the Scriptures to say of the people of the old world and of the cities of the plain, is, that they suffered a premature and a violent death as a punishment for their sins—while righteous Noah and Lot were spared alive as monuments of divine mercy. And although they thus perished, they were still in the power of Him who is Lord both of the living and of the dead. And we rejoice to believe that they will finally be numbered among the kindreds of the earth, all of whom shall be made alive in Jesus Christ, who is "the Head of every man"—the "Lord of all"—and "*the Savior of the world.*"

CHAPTER VIII.

RETRIBUTION UNDER THE OLD TESTAMENT DISPENSATION.

(CONTINUED.)

THE aim of the present chapter is to continue and to conclude our consideration of the particular subject to which the last was devoted. That subject is Retribution under the Old Testament Dispensation. We have already proceeded so far as to bring into view the awful judgment that destroyed the cities of the plain. And thus far we feel justified in the conclusion that no record has been found of any penal retribution in eternity for the conduct of man in this world.

The ancient oracles of God, however, contain a variety of passages which are supposed plainly to teach that the recompense for human actions did extend into the future life, and was pronounced upon the highest authority to be of endless duration. A few of the strongest passages of this character will be brought under review in the present chapter. And if they fail to furnish the proof which our opposers claim to find in them, we shall not think it presumptuous to conclude that all others of like meaning are equally insufficient to prove that rewards and punishments in the olden time were suspended in this world, to be administered in the spiritual and immortal life.

The simple declaration of Solomon, Proverbs xi. 31, "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed *in the earth* much more the wicked and the sinner," seems to have not only a direct, but a most important bearing upon the whole subject of our present investigation. We can think of no passage in all the Old Testament that speaks more plainly concerning the rewards of righteousness and the punishments of sin. Its meaning need not be sought by any lengthened train of logical argument, or by any far-fetched inferences—for nothing could be more obvious and free from all ambiguity. The wayfaring man, though a fool, could hardly mistake the meaning of this declaration: "*Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner.*" No less than six distinct propositions are here expressed—and we believe them all. And they briefly, but most clearly and certainly comprehend the entire doctrine of the Old Testament in regard to the rewards of righteousness and the punishments of sin. 1. There is such a thing as righteousness among men. 2. There is such a thing as wickedness in the world. 3. There is a recompense for the righteous. 4. There is a recompense for the wicked. 5. The recompense of the righteous is *in the earth.* And 6. The recompense of the wicked is *in the earth.*

Now, aside from all the traditions and commandments of men, such is the plain doctrine of the declaration before us—and it is a doctrine which harmonizes in every respect with the whole tenor of the ancient Scriptures. We shall find in them the record of no reward or punishment, conferred

or inflicted in any other than the present state of existence. The reward of righteousness and the punishment of sin were administered *in the earth*—but we are not informed that they extend in any case into the unseen world. And whatever alarming apprehensions may be indulged by those who would be considered the conservators and guardians of all true religion and pure morality, in reference to the subject now before us, we do not feel authorized by any pretence whatever, to go beyond the word of the Lord to say more or less!

We are not to inquire concerning what doctrine is the best suited to the condition and wants of man—the best adapted to restrain the evil passions of his nature—and the most certain to exert a healthful moral influence upon the world. In reference to these things great diversities of opinion prevail—and we grant that they reasonably claim the serious attention of every man. But this is not the proper place for the discussion of these matters. The moral tendency of doctrines does not come within the scope of our present labors. Nor need we here attempt to offer our views concerning the state of the dead, showing what we believe to be the condition of man immediately after the death of the body. These things present very suitable subjects for human investigation. But they do not belong to the subject now before us. And if we would ever come to the knowledge of the truth, we should endeavor to confine our thoughts to one subject at a time.

The simple question now before us relates to what *the Scriptures say* touching the subject of retribution under the olden dispensation. And it is

not for me or for any other person to set up his own private opinion, not sanctioned by the law and the prophets, in regard to the inducements and prohibitions that *should* have been presented to the ancient people of God, in order to restrain them from vice, and to guide them into the ways of virtue and holiness. It is sufficient that we know what motives *were* presented to their minds to shun the way of the transgressors, and to obey the commandments of God. And having fully and satisfactorily ascertained this fact, neither a Christian spirit nor becoming modesty will suffer any man daringly to assert that some other kind of discipline would have been more salutary in its influence, and productive of more happy consequences in the world!

After all the extravagant encomiums that have been lavished upon the heathen dogma of endless misery, its healthful moral influence is not only extremely questionable, but, we think, positively disproved by facts. We shall find on reviewing the history of the Christian Church, that in the darkest and most corrupt periods of its existence, this doctrine prevailed to the greatest extent, and consequently exerted its mightiest influence upon the human heart. The doctrine of Universal Salvation, as taught by Jesus Christ and his apostles, was publicly condemned by the arbitrary decree of a General Council of the Church, at Constantinople, in the year 553. From that unhappy day to the 16th century, a period of nearly a thousand years, the powers of darkness prevailed, and the saving and sanctifying doctrine of endless misery was allowed freely to wield all its mighty and redeeming energies over the hearts of men. And what was the state of

public morals and of private virtue during all that undisturbed reign of a doctrine so highly extolled for its saving and redeeming powers? Crime, pollution and blood were the marks of the Church—and modest virtue and pure religion were almost unknown.

But since the deadly spell was broken by the great Reformation, the light and saving power of divine truth have been gradually extending their benign influence throughout the whole Christian church. And knowledge, virtue, refinement and genuine religion have been promoted in the world in exact proportion to the advances of all denominations toward the doctrine and principles of universal benevolence! Wherever mental freedom and general intelligence are found to prevail, the antiquated and barbarous dogmas of the church loose their hold upon the human mind—and the morals and the happiness of society are consequently improved. And we certainly think that in view of these facts—facts which none can gainsay—the advocates of that doctrine which puts off rewards and punishments to a distant and hereafter state of being, and represents them as being extremely uncertain withal, should at least speak with some degree of modesty concerning its wonderfully moral tendency and sanctifying effects. But we wander.

The peculiar phraseology of the passage in Proverbs, to which we have referred, may require a word of explanation. It would seem that no person could fail to understand its general meaning. But some persons may possibly be unable to determine what is signified by the expression "*much more.*" "The righteous shall be recompensed in

the earth: *much more* the wicked and the sinner." It may be thought that the recompense of the sinner was to be much *greater* than that of the righteous. But a reference to this phrase as used in other parts of the Scriptures, will lead to a very different conclusion. Our Savior said to his disciples—"If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not *much more* cloth you, O ye of little faith?" Here a plain fact is first stated, namely, that God *does* clothe the grass of the field—and the expression *much more* was not intended to contradict or even to weaken the force of this fact, but simply to render the declaration more *emphatic* that God would *certainly* clothe the disciples of his Son. We may notice one more instance of this kind. Jesus said to his hearers—"If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how MUCH MORE shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" The fact is here plainly admitted that earthly parents *do* give good gifts to their children. And from this fact it is argued that God, with infinitely greater benevolence, will *certainly* bestow good things upon them that ask him. But it would be extremely unreasonable to suppose that one fact was introduced to disprove the other.

In the light of these passages the meaning of the declaration before us is easily understood. The righteous are recompensed *in the earth*—and *certainly* the wicked and the sinner are also thus recompensed. Dr. A. CLARKE renders the original of this place, "Behold, to the righteous it shall be returned on the earth; and *also* to the wicked and

the transgressor." Note on 1st Peter iv. 18. Both classes were to receive according to their works—and the recompense was to be administered *in the earth.* And the same doctrine is declared in terms no less positive and unequivocal in many other parts of the ancient Scriptures. We may barely notice a few passages of this character. The Psalmist says, "Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily he is a God that *judgeth in the earth.*" And Jehovah himself says in the 9th chapter of Jeremiah, "I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, *judgment and righteousness in the earth.*" These passages, with others of like meaning, that could be cited, conclusively show that the present world was considered a state of *retribution*—and that here the judgments of the Lord were *executed* in rewarding the virtuous and in punishing the vicious.

In attempting to examine the particular passages before referred to, we shall avail ourselves of the concessions of our opposers. We have a right to employ their acknowledgments as arguments on our side of the question. Men do not admit facts that bear against their own favorite theories, until the evidence becomes too strong to be resisted. And such admissions coming from men of sound learning and deep research, furnish no inconsiderable proof against their own doctrines. All such proof, however, will be considered only as collateral.

1st. The first passage to which we shall direct our attention is found in Deut. xxxii. 22, and reads thus:—"*For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell.*" This text has

been regarded as a most awful threatening of the terrible woes that awaited the wicked and rebellious Israelites in the future and spiritual world. And it has been supposed that they were to sink into the lowest depths of that awful pit of perdition, where there are sufferings so intense and excruciating, and of such fearful horrors, as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man ever been able to conceive. But though the sound of these words has become as shocking to many ears as the fabled clanking of the prisoner's chains in hell, we can find nothing in the connexion of this passage to warrant any such exposition. Nay, we are there furnished with abundant proof that the threatened punishment was to be endured in this world. Let us read the connexion of the passage. "For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth [or land] with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. I will heap mischiefs upon them: I will spend mine arrows upon them. They shall be burnt with *hunger*, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send *the teeth of beasts* upon them, with the poison of *serpents* of the dust. The *sword* without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also, with the man of gray hairs."

And shall we suppose that *the teeth of beasts, the poison of serpents of the dust, and the sword of the conquering warrior* will be made the instrument of horrid tortures to immortalized sufferers in the world of spirits? And in that miserable throng, disowned and tormented of God, will there

be found the *tender suckling* with the man of gray hairs? A doctrine that cannot be sustained without substituting such wild fancies for solid proof, is unworthy of the belief of any thinking being. And if, to justify their construction of this passage, our opponents assert that the instruments of punishments here named merely *represent* the outpourings of terrible vengeance in eternity, we have only to remind them that this assertion, though very easily uttered, requires *proof* that has never yet been furnished?

As to the phrase "the lowest hell," we find it used in such a manner as seems altogether to preclude its reference to the spiritual state of existence, while it manifestly confines its application to the concerns of this life. In view of his happy deliverance from a condition of extreme debasement and suffering, David thus rendered thanksgiving to God—"Great is thy mercy toward me: *and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.*" If then, David could be in *the lowest hell* without suffering immortal pains beyond death, there seems to be no necessity in the nature of the case, for supposing that the Israelites to whom we have referred, could not suffer the like punishment in the present mode of existence.

And in view of these considerations, the only thing that excites our astonishment in the following important concession of Dr. CLARKE, is his unusual candor. In commenting on the passage in Deut., before cited, he says, "The lowest hell—the very deepest destruction; a total extermination, so that *the earth*, their land, and its *increase*, and all their property, should be seized, and the *foun-*

dations of their mountains, their strongest fortresses, should be razed to the ground. All this was fulfilled in a most remarkablé manner in the last destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans: so that of the fortifications of that city not one stone was left on another."

We take our leave of this passage with the single remark, that people must feel that they are hard pressed for proofs of a favorite doctrine when they will eagerly seize upon a text which relates only to temporal judgments in the earth, and without any proper regard for its connexion and obvious meaning, insist upon applying it to the concerns of another world!

2d. There is a passage in the 9th Psalm, which has been quoted times without number as a proof-text of the strongest kind in favor of the graceless dogma of infinite sufferings for a vast proportion of the human race. "*The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.*" Now it is easily perceived that the entire proof drawn from this passage rests upon one word—*hell.* If the Psalmist had merely said, *the wicked nations who forget God shall be cut off from the earth,* no one would have supposed him to countenance the doctrine in question. And it strikes our mind that the opposer assumes entirely too much, when he confidently takes it for granted that this simple word must denote a state of ceaseless and immortal sufferings beyond death. Its literal meaning, according to the consent of candid persons, and agreeably to its constant usage in the Scriptures, is the state of the dead in general. Hence Jacob declared that he would go down to *hell,*

where he hoped to meet his son Joseph, whom he supposed to have been slain of wild beasts. And hence also we read that Christ's soul was not left in *hell.* But the same word is also used *figuratively,* to denote great sorrow and distress and punishment for sin—as when David said, "the sorrows of *hell* compassed me about," and "the pains of *hell* gat hold upon me"—and also when Christ said to Capernaum, "And thou which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be thrust down to *hell.*"

Besides, it should be understood, that the 9th Psalm was a hymn of thanksgiving to God for victory over the heathen enemies of Israel. Mark the language of the Psalmist. "The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they have made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken. The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever. Arise, O Lord; let not man prevail; let the heathen be judged in thy sight. Put them in fear, O Lord; that the nations may know themselves to be but men."

The meaning of the Psalmist, we think, is well expressed by the learned NOYES, (who will not be suspected of any desire to favor our peculiar views,) in the following words—The heathen shall be "driven into scheol, [hell,] i. e. pursued by victorious enemies till they are destroyed." And Dr. ALLEN, late president of Bowdoin College, Maine, thus speaks in his published Lectures on Universal Salvation, and in reference to the passage now un-

der consideration—"The punishment expressed, is cutting off from life, destroying from the earth, by some special judgment, and removing to the invisible state of the dead. The term [*scheol*] does not seem to mean with certainty any thing more than the state of the dead in their deep abode." And we may add to all this that the Psalmist's exultation over the enemies that had fallen, and his declaration that the judgments of God would still pursue the enemies of Israel, and cut them off from the land of the living, should hardly be deemed conclusive proof of the notion that *immortal* sufferings were denounced against any soul of man!

3d. We next present a passage from the 33d chapter of Isaiah. "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Here, it is said with an air of boasting confidence, that we have the account of a punishment that was to be *everlasting*, and which must therefore have extended into a state of being that is without end. We do not doubt that this notion is most sincerely believed—but we feel quite confident that its believers leap to the *conclusion* without stopping to consider the *premises*. And the doctrine before us is not derived from the passage, but the passage is violently warped and twisted to make it suit the doctrine.

Now there is hardly a fact stated in the Scriptures that is susceptible of stronger and more abundant proof, than that the word *everlasting* is *commonly* applied to things having both their beginning and their end in this world. The possession of the land of Canaan by the Jews, was called

everlasting—so was the priesthood of Aaron—and so also was the covenant of circumcision. All these things and many more that might be mentioned, commenced and closed in this state of being. And in whatever sense the word *everlasting* may now be used, we are concerned only with its *Scriptural* signification.

Besides, it deserves to be particularly noticed that the passage now under consideration is expressed in the form of a question—and perhaps the answer which follows may throw some light upon its true meaning. "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Such language, rudely severed from its proper connexion, and without any reference to the response immediately succeeding, is quite unintelligible. And if we would know any thing of what was intended, we should exercise a little patience, and attend to the answer, instead of trying to be satisfied with the mere sound of words, and then flying off to something else. The prophet gives the true answer in these words:—"*He* that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil. *He* shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure." *Such* was the man who was promised security from danger and harm amid the most terrible judgments of God against the hypocrites and sinners in Zion—and which judgments were represented by devouring fire and

everlasting burnings. Though living among the wicked during the time of their punishment, the good man, walking righteously and speaking uprightly, should still be protected in his integrity, and pass unharmed through every fiery trial. Here, then, we have the plain meaning of the prophet as exhibited in the answer to his own question. And he who can find any thing in this passage in proof of merciless penal sufferings in the future world, must have powers of perception rarely found among men, and far from being desirable in any.

4th. We shall notice but one more passage from the Old Testament, supposed to be at variance with the positions which we have assumed. Many persons would no doubt regard it as a most desperate act to attempt to expound such a passage consistently with the doctrine which holds that under the old dispensation, the recompense of righteousness and the punishment of sin were administered *in the earth.* But we are not to be held accountable for all the strange things which people please to fancy—and the only object of our search is truth. The passage referred to is contained in the 12th Chapter of Daniel, and reads thus:—"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Perhaps this passage is relied upon with greater assurance, and more confidently cited to substantiate the doctrine from which we dissent, than any other contained in the Old Testament. We wish not to be presumptuous—nor do we set up the claim to any extraordinary abilities in expounding the sacred oracles. But we cannot bow submis-

sively to the opinions of the majority, and believe without reason or proof, and against the testimony of the Scriptures. And we only ask that our views and the reasons by which they are sustained, may be weighed in the balance of candor, and fairly tested by the only infallible standard of truth.

It seems not to occur to the minds of those who construe the passage in question according to the popular belief, that it contains a prophecy—and that the fulfilment of this prophecy has been declared by him who spake as never man spake. Let us carefully notice the connexion of the pasage itself, that the testimony of our Lord may be clearly understood. Daniel says, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; *and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time:* and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." And in a subsequent part of the same chapter, the *time* is again stated to be, "*when* he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished."

Now let us be careful to notice the following declarations of our Lord in the 24th chapter of Matthew, concerning the destruction of the holy city, and the scattering of the power of the ancient people of God: "When ye therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth

let him understand,) THEN let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the house top not come down to take anything out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. * * * But pray that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath-day: For THEN (mark the very language of the prophet Daniel) *for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time, no nor ever shall be.*"

Here, then, we find a positive declaration of the fulfilment of Daniel's prediction at a time which is now past. It referred to the time when the power of the holy people should be scattered, and the abomination that maketh desolate should be set up in the holy place. That time did come—and the prophecy was accomplished to the very letter.

And that the holy people, or the people of God who were *called holy* without reference to character, should be represented as *sleeping in the dust of the earth*, need excite no surprise, when we reflect that Ezekiel declared the same people to be in their *graves*, when they were captives in Babylon—and gave them the assurance that they should be brought up out of their *graves*, and reinstated in their own *land*. Ezekiel xxxvii. Isaiah called upon Zion, or the ancient Church of God, to arise and shake herself *from the dust of the earth*—that is, to arise from her slumbering and degraded condition. The whole house of Israel thus slept in the dust of the earth, when the Son of God came to execute judgment in the earth. And while some came forth at the sound of the Gospel to the enjoyment of that everlasting life, which

consists in the knowledge of God and of his Son Jesus Christ—others arose to the judgment of condemnation, and to the suffering of shame and everlasting contempt!

We have now briefly, but we trust fairly considered a number of the principal texts of the Old Testament, which are supposed to prove that it threatened man with punishment in the immortal world for the sins of the present life. And we have found that they all utterly fail to yield any such proof. They are wrested from their proper connexion, and applied to a subject to which they bear no necessary relation, when used for the support of this doctrine. We have not attempted to discuss the question whether there will be penal sufferings in the future world for the sins of the present life. We have only aimed to show what the Scriptures of the Old Testament taught in regard to rewards and punishments for human conduct. And in view of all that has been said, we cannot avoid the conclusion that Dr. JAHN testified truly when he said in 314th section of his Biblical Archaeology: "We have not authority, therefore, decidedly to say that any other motives were held out to the ancient Hebrews to pursue the good and to avoid the evil, than those which were derived from the rewards and punishments of *this life*. That these *were* the motives, which were presented to their minds in order to influence them to pursue a right course of conduct, is expressly asserted in Is. 26: 9, 10, and may be learnt also from the imprecations, which are met with, in many parts of the Old Testament."

There is one important consideration connected

with our subject, which we desire briefly to notice before we conclude. St. Paul says in the 2d chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, "For if the word spoken by angels (that is, the *law*, which Stephen says was received 'by the disposition of *angels*') was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience *received a just recompense of reward*, how shall *we* escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" The fact is here most plainly asserted that under the law of Moses, every transgression and disobedience *received a just* recompense of reward—that is, a recompense *proportionate* to the deeds of every transgression. And pray who need be told that that recompense must have been limited in duration, or else it could not have been *received in full?*

That the recompense of which the apostle speaks did not extend into another state of being, will appear still more evident when we consider that God would not inflict upon his ancient people a punishment of which he never apprised them—and when we reflect that our Savior brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. A future state of being was not, therefore, fully revealed to the world under the Old Testament Dispensation. And the distinguished Dr. CAMPBELL, of the Presbyterian Church, has said, "It is plain that in the Old Testament *the most profound silence is observed* in regard to the *state* of the deceased, their joy or sorrow, their happiness or misery." This statement is true, if it means (as we suppose it does) that nothing was said in the Old Testament in regard to the particular *condition* of man in the future life. And who is prepared to assert that rewards

and punishments beyond death were taught in a book which was confessedly written before the immortal state of being and the condition of man in eternity were fully brought to light through the Gospel of Christ?

In conclusion, we shall briefly notice an objection that may be urged against the argument of the chapter. It may be said "that if man was destined to a resurrection from the dead into immortality before the immortal state of being was fully revealed in the Gospel, some of our race might be made happy and others miserable after death, according to their conduct while in the flesh—and that the Gospel might, therefore, have made revelations of future punishment, as well as of future happiness." In view of this objection we remark, that it would be difficult to show the justice of God in dooming his creatures to a punishment of which he never warned them. And we should be slow of heart to ascribe to him the procedure of condemning men to penal sufferings beyond death, at a time when his word "observed the most profound silence in regard to the *state* of the deceased!" That God should have designed man for the enjoyment of the immortal and heavenly inheritance, is consistent alike with justice and goodness—for that inheritance is not the recompense of works, but the free gift of divine grace. Man has no power over it—and God revealed the resurrection and spiritual state of glory, just when it was proper in the plan of his government that such knowledge should be communicated to man.

Besides, it should be well understood and never forgotten, that the Gospel is expressly called a new

and *better* covenant than the legal, because established upon *better promises*—and *not* because it reveals dreadful and horrible evils that were altogether unknown to the old dispensation. It declares that God "is the Savior of all men." And its clear testimony in regard to the future and immortal life is "FOR AS IN ADAM ALL DIE, EVEN SO IN CHRIST SHALL ALL BE MADE ALIVE."

CHAPTER IX.

GOSPEL PROMISES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

In this chapter, which will be the last relating particularly to the Old Testament, we shall endeavor to prove that the ancient Scriptures promised the final holiness and happiness of the whole human race. The reader of the preceding chapter may be somewhat astonished that we should now attempt to defend such a position. We have maintained that the state of man in the future and immortal life was not fully revealed until the introduction of the gospel dispensation. And we now propose to show that the olden Scriptures did promise the ultimate blessedness of all mankind in the heavenly nature of Jesus Christ, beyond mortality and death. At first view their seems here to be a manifest contradiction—and no doubt it will appear to some minds entirely impossible to maintain and harmonize these two apparently conflicting positions.

The fact that the final condition of man in the future and immortal state of existence was not fully revealed to the world under the Old Testament dispensation, is now very generally admitted, and we think may be considered incontrovertible. And this fact need not be denied or concealed in order to establish the position which we have assumed. For although the Old Testament promised a future

and *happy* life for the human family in the second man, who is the quickening spirit, its meaning was never clearly understood in all its fulness and extent, until the great "Sun of Righteousness" arose in the brightness of his glory, and shed upon its pages a new and heavenly light. On the subject of man's immortality, or his condition in the immortal state, the Old Testament may be represented by the figure of the moon in the heavens, which is dark of itself, but which glows with a clear and bright lustre "when shining with reflected light." And as seen in the bright effulgence of the gospel revelation, that ancient book is found to abound with great and precious promises of salvation—promises which not only extend beyond death, but which also embrace the final glory and bliss of the vast family of Adam!

The New Testament plainly declares that our Savior, Jesus Christ, hath brought life and immortality to *light* through the Gospel. 2d Tim. i. 10. It is therefore plain that this great revelation of truth was not fully made known until the "more excellent ministry" of our Redeemer was instituted in the earth. And yet we find that in addressing the Sadducees in reference to the resurrection of the dead and the life immortal, Jesus assured them that the books of Moses, in which they trusted to the exclusion of all other Scripture, contained certain evidences of man's future and immortal existence. After declaring that in the spiritual world marriage shall be unknown, and that the children of the resurrection shall there be "as the angels of God in heaven," he thus testified: "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read

that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Mat. xxii. 31, 32. And St. Luke, after recording this same dialogue adds to the declaration, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living: *for all live unto him.*"

Now when God thus spake to Moses out of the bush, the patriarchs of whom he declared himself still to be the God, had passed off the stage of mortal existence, and their bones were mouldering in the dust. And as Jehovah was still their God, it is manifest that they were still in existence, since "God is not the God of the dead but of the living: for all live unto him." But this certain proof of life for the soul beyond the dissolution of the material body, was not clearly understood and fully discerned by man, until God's chosen Messenger of the new and better covenant of promise, shed the light of immortality around the grave of the sleeper, and laid open to the vision of faith the glorious and heavenly inheritance of our race! And with the aid of this better revelation, a careful investigation will remove every doubt that the Old Testament did promise a happy life beyond death, and immortal blessings in Christ beyond all corruption and every evil. Such promises, however, were not fully understood, until explained in the clear light of the Gospel. The spirit of divine promise saw far more than the ancient Seers were themselves permitted to behold. But some of their predictions, though uttered *before* the immortal life was brought to light through the Gospel, must have their ultimate fulfilment (as we shall attempt to

show) in the redemption of our race from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God!

Our Savior affirmed that he came into the world to bear witness unto the truth. And it seems evident from his own language that the truth to which he bore testimony was contained in the Scriptures of the Old Testament—though that truth was not well understood until explained by himself. He said on a certain occasion to the Jews, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." Jno. v. 39. No person need be informed that Jesus here referred to the *Old Testament*—for the *New* was not then written. The Jews searched their scriptures to find that knowledge which is eternal life—and Jesus assured them that those very scriptures testified of him. And hence he reproved them for their obstinacy and unwillingness to come unto him that they might receive the very life which they thought to find.

The Messiah not only brought to *light* the immortal state of being—but he also revealed the mind of the Spirit in the ancient records of divine truth. Holy men of old truly spake as they were moved by the Spirit of God—but they did not so clearly and perfectly understand the meaning of that Spirit, as did He who came from the bosom of the Father, full of grace and truth. We must therefore search the plain revelation of Christ to ascertain the real meaning and intent of the law and the prophets. And we should remember that our Savior declared in reference to those who receive the truths of his kingdom, "Among them which are

born of woman there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is *greater* than he."

It should be particularly remarked in this place, that the great *mystery* which the Gospel unfolds relates to the divine *promises*—and that the revelation of this mystery shows the large extent and the glorious fulfilment of these promises. This profound mystery was the object of deep and strong desire with the wise men and prophets of old—and even angels are represented as desiring to look into the promises which God made unto the fathers. We find nothing, however, in all the revelation of Christ concerning dreadful and lasting sufferings, of an entirely different character from any that were made known to man before the introduction of the better covenant. But it shows something exceeding in excellence and glory all the former conceptions of the human mind—and it opens to the prospect of our faith the incorruptible and unfading inheritance of heaven for the whole race of man!

On this interesting theme the apostle Paul thus speaks to the Colossians:—"I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; even the *mystery* which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but is now made manifest to his saints; to whom God would make known what is the riches of *the glory of this mystery* among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, *the hope of glory*." Such was the great mystery that had been concealed from ages and from generations. And the *revelation* of this mystery in the Gospel opens to the prospect of our faith the inheritance of heaven

and inspires the *hope* through Christ of immortal and unfading bliss. And it is moreover proved by the clear testimony of the same apostle that this revelation declares the eventual ingathering and blessedness of all mankind in one Lord and Redeemer. He says, Ephesians 1. 8–10, "Wherein he (that is God) hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; *having made known unto us the mystery of his will*, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one *all things* in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in him."

Now in view of all these considerations, we are prepared to understand what the apostle means, 2d Peter i. 21, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The ancient prophets of the Lord did not draw their predictions from an observance of the signs of the times, and a calculation of probable occurrences. They gave expression to the spirit of divine promise which dwelt in them. And we may well conclude that in many instances they knew nothing of the extent and glory of the prophecies which they indited through "the inspiration of the Almighty." They declared not their own opinions, but spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit of God. And though they searched diligently into the things of which they spake, and even angels desired to look into those things, the great mystery was never solved, until the chosen Messenger of the new covenant laid open the whole plan of gospel grace, and

declared himself to be the resurrection and the spiritual life of the world!

St. Peter again says of our Redeemer, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. *Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently*, who prophecied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what or what manner of *time* the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, *that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things* which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."

From this passage it is manifest that the prophets of old spake of the salvation of man through Jesus Christ. And it is also shown that while they diligently searched into this salvation, and desired to ascertain the *time* when it should be fully revealed, they were sensible that they ministered to future generations, to whom this great mystery *should* be made known. *We* are blessed with the *revelation* of this mystery. And in the clear light of the Gospel we now plainly see that the ancient promises of God embrace the resurrection of the dead and the final glory and bliss of man. And indeed we find that when St. Paul stood accused before King Agrippa, he plainly declared in his defence,—"And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the

promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. *Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?*" Here, then, we plainly perceive that in declaring the ancient promises of God, the apostle made them embrace man's future and immortal life. These promises, therefore, though not perfectly understood at the time when they were first spoken, are now seen to have extended beyond the reign of sin and death—while they give to us comforting assurances of final blessedness in the Lord of life and glory!

But though this train of thought might be greatly extended, we trust that enough has already been said to render it obvious to every mind that the Old Testament did contain promises of immortal life and heavenly bliss. And here we are reminded that the promises themselves deserve to be carefully noticed. We shall not feel justified, however, in seizing upon any passage in the ancient Scriptures that seems to promise universal blessedness, and without any regard to its true meaning, insist upon forcing it into a proof of ultimate salvation through Jesus Christ. But when we find a passage of the Old Testament thus explained in the New, we surely do no violence to the sacred text in presenting such explanation in connexion with the passage itself. And it will be perceived that the few passages about to be introduced are applied in the Gospel to the final and glorious results of Christ's mediation between God and man.

We cannot well pass over that most remarkable promise which God made to the earliest inhabitants of the earth—a promise which extends to the completion of the Messiah's work in the salvation of the world. Some persons have indeed supposed that the first sin of man deprived him of all favor of God, and exposed both him and all his posterity to interminable woes! But this notion, alike opposed to reason and to scripture truth, will be abundantly refuted as we proceed.

On referring to the 3d chapter of Genesis, we find the whole account, not only of the first temptation and sin, but also of the *curse* that was consequently denounced. In the same connexion we find one of the most gracious promises on record. And this great promise was made immediately after the first transgression—thus showing that sin itself had not removed the paternal love of God from his offspring on earth. There was a *curse* pronounced upon the cause of sin and mortal woe, which was the tempter, or the principle of evil represented under the similitude of a serpent. And the *promise* of which we speak was declared in these memorable words:—"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heal." Now we do not pretend that this promise was understood in all its length breadth at the time when it was uttered—and that it was then perceived to mean that evil and all its works shall be destroyed by the Savior of the world. We look to the New Testament for the true explanation—and the whole subject is there made perfectly plain. Jesus is said to have been

"made of a woman"—and perhaps he was thus designated because he had no father on earth. And the fact is abundantly testified that he was empowered of God to destroy the devil and his works.

It should be remarked that the seed of the serpent was merely to bruise the *heel* of the seed of the woman. A slight wound only was to be inflicted—and that was to be done by the hands of those who were in character the children of the devil. And the fact is worthy of notice that our Savior said to those who maliciously sought his life, and at last put him to death, "*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.*" He did not mean that those Jews whom he addressed were in reality the offspring of an evil being—but that they sustained such a character, and were so influenced by the power of evil, as to render it proper that he should denominate them a "*generation of vipers.*" The principle of evil is thus personified, and represented as the agent who acted through them in putting to death "the man Christ Jesus."

But the seed of the woman was to inflict a more deadly blow. He was to bruise the *head* of the serpent. And hence we find it written, Heb. ii. 14, "For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he (Christ) also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might *destroy* him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Nor is it merely declared that the seed which was promised will destroy the devil himself. The apostle John proceeds still farther, and affirms, "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, *that he might destroy the works of the devil.*" 1st John iii. 8.

Such is the great work which the Redeemer of the world has undertaken to perform—and all power in heaven and in earth has been given him for its accomplishment. We rejoice to believe that he will succeed—for the unalterable oath of the Living God has been pledged for his prosperity. And when he shall have destroyed death, which is *the last enemy*, there can be no foe left to torment man—and while grace and life through Jesus Christ our Lord shall become triumphant and universal, *God himself shall be all in all!*

Again, the promises that were made to Abraham and renewed to his descendants, are so explained in the New Testament as to justify their application to the final condition of mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord. Every reader is supposed to be familiar with these remarkable promises—and such as are not may become acquainted with them by consulting the 12th, 18th, 22d and 26th chapters of Genesis. In examining these places we find that *all the nations and all the families of the earth* were to be blessed in the promised seed. And that the entire race of man was embraced in this great promise, so plainly appears from the exposition which St. Peter has given it, that no room is left for any reasonable doubt. In speaking to the Jews, he says, Acts iii. 25, "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, *And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.*" Now if absolute *universality* is not here expressed, we confess our ignorance of the meaning of language, and our inability to find any words that will express this idea. Although it

might be supposed that some men are of no nation, and others allied to no particular family, yet to talk of a man who is not a *kindred* of the earth, is to use language without meaning. The conclusion is therefore irresistible that the promise in question includes every human being, and purposes to bless them all without respect of persons.

And having thus settled this point we may properly inquire concerning the *nature* of the promised blessing. All the kindreds of the earth, it is declared, shall be blessed in the *seed* of Abraham, or in the seed of the woman who sprang from his posterity. After calling this promise the Gospel, which God himself preached to Abraham, saying, "In thee shall all nations be blessed." St. Paul thus speaks, Gal. iii. 16, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many: but as of *one, and to thy seed, which is Christ.*"

Here, then, in the clear light of the Gospel the ancient promise of God to Abraham is explained to mean nothing less than the salvation of the world through Jesus Christ. And after citing this promise in all its fulness and extent, St. Peter immediately added to the persons whom he addressed, "Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to *bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.*" In strict accordance with this fact, Jesus is called "the Lamb of God, which *taketh away the sin of the world.*" His office is to finish sin—to destroy the devil and his works—and to reconcile all things unto God. And he will not fail nor be discouraged in his work—but the pleasure of the Lord will prosper

in his hand, and he will see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied!

We are aware of the belief that the promise of which we have spoken is fulfilled when salvation is *prvoided* and freely *offered* to all mankind—though but a part will actually be saved. But if this notion be true, all the kindreds of the earth might be blessed in Christ, according to the promise, and yet not one soul ever inherit the promised blessing! For *provisions* might be made for all, and the *offer* might be presented to all, and still no man be actually blessed in the promised seed! This would be rather a strange fulfilment of promise! But the promise itself, as we have found it stated and reiterated, says nothing whatever about *provisions* and *offers*—but it plainly declares the fact that all the kindreds of the earth shall be blessed in Christ Jesus! And the only proper question between our opposers and ourselves is, whether this ancient promise of God will ever be fulfilled.

The notion prevails to a great extent that none of mankind can ever be blessed in Christ, after having died in Adam, except such as believe and comply with certain conditions *in the present world.* But the very advocates of this notion themselves are not satisfied with the conclusion to which it certainly leads. They know that millions of our race die without ever having heard of a Savior—and that if this notion be true, they must all eternally perish. And yet they shudder at the bare thought, and deny all faith in the conclusion resulting from their own avowed belief—and they at once freely admit and even contend that many will be blessed in Christ, who have never in this life exercised

faith in his name! Such they certainly hold will be the case with all who die in *infancy*. And the moment it is admitted that one human soul may be blessed in Christ without having exercised faith and performed good works in the world, that moment it is fully conceded that these things are not *essential* to the inheritance of the promised blessing of heaven!

We humbly trust that we prize the blessings of faith in the Redeemer as highly as any other people, and we earnestly insist upon the performance of good works, because, as an apostle has testified, and as our own experience declares, "these things are good and profitable unto men." But we do not believe that any doings of our own will either secure or forfeit the life and blessings which God has graciously promised to us and to all mankind in his Son. And hence we find that immediately after citing and explaining the promise under consideration, St. Paul asks the question, "Is the *law* then against the promises of God?" and gives this significant answer, "*God forbid.*" Gal. iii. 21.

The apostle did not believe that there is any penalty annexed to God's law, the infliction of which will to any extent nullify the divine promises. But he did believe, as the Scriptures abundantly teach, that God will render to every man according to his deeds—and yet that far beyond all rewards and punishments, and of his own free and impartial grace, he will bless the whole race of Adam with immortal life and joy in the second man, who is the quickening spirit and "the Savior of the world."

We shall introduce but one more passage in

proof of the fact that the Old Testament promised the universal salvation of our race through Jesus Christ. The passage has been so frequently repeated, and is so familiar to all, that it need hardly be quoted at length. In the 25th chapter of Isaiah we find a prediction concerning the mountain in which the Lord of hosts was to make a feast of fat things for all people—and it is there promised that "he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. *He will swallow up death in victory: and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces.*" Now St. Paul speaks, Gal. iv, and Heb. xii, of the old and new covenants under the figures of Mount Sinai and Mount Sion. And we think it but reasonable to conclude that the *mountain* in the passage just cited, and in which a feast was to be prepared *for all people*, means the *Gospel Covenant*, which embraces all the kindreds of the earth, and which furnishes the bread of God for the life of the world. But the clear explanation presented by the apostle himself will prove far more satisfactory than any that we could offer.

In the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians we are furnished with a full and connected discourse on the subject of man's future state of existence and the final and glorious results of the Messiah's kingdom. The fact of Christ's resurrection from the dead is first stated, and abundantly proved by reference to the testimony of a great cloud of living and credible witnesses. From this fact it is shown that all mankind will in like manner be raised from the dead, and made alive in Him who is our forerunner to glory—"the head of every man"—

and "the Savior of the world." And when this universal triumph over death shall have been achieved, it is declared that the *last* enemy shall be destroyed, and all things shall be made subject unto Christ, *even as* he also shall be subject unto the Father, that *God may be all in all!*

The apostle afterwards proceeds to illustrate the resurrection, and to show how the dead are raised up and with what body they come. He says, "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." And here it should be observed, that the apostle speaks not of any particular class of mankind, but of *the dead*—or, in other words, he speaks of all who die in the earthy nature of Adam. And while he certifies that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," he also declares, "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the *heavenly*."

Having proceeded thus far wih his explanation of the resurrection of the vast family of Adam, and the successful and glorious issue of the gospel dispensation, the apostle gives utterance to the following language, which will show the full meaning of the passage cited from Isaiah:—"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; (for the trumpet shall sound;) and the *dead* shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be

changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, *then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written*, DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY." Now no person need be told *where* this saying is written. We have already read the original promise of God in the ancient record of his truth. And the apostle Paul has declared the fulfilment of this promise. The saying will be brought to pass, when death, *the last enemy*, shall be swallowed up in victory. And it should not be forgotten that when this last and great victory of the Son of God shall be accomplished, TEARS SHALL BE WIPED FROM OFF ALL FACES—and pain and sorrow will therefore be unknown to any soul of man!

Then shall the glad song of VICTORY through the Lamb of God over sin, death and hell, dwell upon every tongue—the perfect praises of a whole family in heaven shall be heard in the grand jubilee of redemption—Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time, shall see the results of his labors with satisfaction and delight—and the LORD himself shall rejoice over his works with singing and joy!

Thus, then, we find that God has of a truth spoken of the restitution of all things by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. We rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory that the clear light of the Gospel of Christ has been shed upon the ancient record of God's truth—so that we are now enabled to see what prophets were not permitted to behold, and to understand the things

into which angels had desired to look. And we bless the holy name of God that we are now permitted by faith—strong and confiding faith—to behold the bright and happy period, when unto God the Father, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer, every knee shall bow in humble submission to the power of love, and every tongue shall joyfully declare, "IN THE LORD HAVE I RIGHTEOUSNESS AND STRENGTH."

CHAPTER X.

THE TRINITY.

THE subject which we now propose to di
is *the doctrine of the Trinity*—a doctrine whic
do not believe is taught in any part of the wo
God. We feel perfectly free to investigate
doctrine with the aid of reason in the light o
Scriptures. And though we shall use great p
ness of speech, we hope not to betray a want of
per respect for the opinions and feelings of a
our Christian brethren. Others have the same
to hold and to defend what they honestly be
to be God's truth, that we dare claim for ourse
But we cannot allow that any doctrine that
ever been revealed to man should be consic
too sacred to be freely and thoroughly exam
Let it not be supposed, however, that we inte
make our own feeble reason the great standa
faith. We believe that the Scriptures are the
standard. But the meaning expressed in the S
tures can never be apprehended without the
per exercise of that reason and that understan
which are the highest endowments of our na
And while we desire to bow with all beco
submission to the authority of God's word, w
that duty requires us diligently to seek a knowl
of the sense and meaning of that word.

The subject before us opens a wide field for discussion—and we have no expectation that we shall be able fully to examine it in all its parts. The attention of the reader will be directed to several of the most plausible arguments in favor of the tri-personality of the Godhead—and afterwards we shall offer a number of insuperable objections against this doctrine. And the conclusion of the whole matter will, we think, be found most clearly expressed in the following words of St. Paul:—"*For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*" 1st Tim. ii. 5.

In order to avoid even the appearance of misrepresenting the doctrine of the Trinity, we shall carefully state this doctrine in the very language of its believers. The first article of the Articles of Religion of the Episcopal Church is thus expressed:—"There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts or passions; of infinite power, wisdom and goodness; the Maker and Preserver of all things visible and invisible. *And in unity of this Godhead, there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.*" And in the Shorter Catechism of the Presbyterian Church, we find the following question and answer:—"Q. *How many persons are there in the Godhead?* A. There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory." Such then is the doctrine of the Trinity. It holds that there are *three persons* in the Godhead—and that these three several persons are of *the same*

substance, equal in power and glory, and co-existent in their being. All Trinitarians, we think, will freely admit that such is the doctrine which they believe.

We may safely assume in the outset that no man will attempt to adduce arguments in support of this doctrine from any other source than the Scriptures. For surely none can pretend that there is any thing either in reason or in nature to warrant the supposition that *three persons* ever existed in *one being*. So far as the instructions of reason are concerned, we might as well suppose that *three beings* could exist in *one person*. Reason teaches no man that a *son* can be as old as his *father*. And nature never instructed any one to believe that *three persons* were ever numerically but *one and the same being*.

The Scriptures, then, must be regarded as furnishing the only supposed proofs of the Trinity. The believers of this doctrine will freely admit that it is purely a doctrine of revelation. And here we are quite willing to rest the whole argument. We ask for no more effectual weapons to refute and overthrow this doctrine than such as the Scriptures furnish. And without attempting any thing farther by way of preliminary, we shall proceed at once to state and to examine the principal arguments drawn from the Scriptures to prove that there are three persons in the Godhead, of one substance, and equal in power, glory and eternity.

1st. It is declared that Christ is expressly called *God* in numerous places of the divine word—that the *incommunicable* name of Jehovah is applied to him—and that therefore he must be of the same

substance, and equal in power and glory with the Almighty Father.

Now we certainly wish not to deny or to keep out of view any fact stated in the Scripture—and we therefore freely grant that Christ is called *God*. But we deny that this fact proves him to be the Supreme Deity, and his own *father* and his own *son!* Let us notice the places where Christ is called God, and endeavor to ascertain what is really meant in such places. There is a passage in the 9th chapter of Isaiah, which has been urged with very great confidence to establish the Trinitarian hypothesis. It reads thus:—"For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Now here it deserves to be carefully noticed, that the person of whom the prophet speaks, was a *child*, and was *given* to us by another. It is plain, therefore, that he must have had a *father*, and must also have proceeded from a *giver*. And without attempting to present before the reader a lengthened argument on this subject, he is left to decide for himself whether it is proper to say, or reasonable to conclude, that the prophet meant to teach that the Supreme God was ever a *child* and *given* to us!

As to the several *names* here used, they effect not the *nature* of the person of whom the prophet discourses. And if it be earnestly insisted that this person must be the Supreme Deity, because he is called God, the argument will be found to prove entirely too much, and to destroy itself. Moses

was expressly called *God*—but no one argues from this fact that he was the Almighty Jehovah. Thus we read, Exodus vii. 1, "And the Lord said unto Moses, see I have made thee a *God* to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall by thy prophet." And again we read, Pslam lxxxii. 6, 7, "I have said, ye are *Gods;* and all of you are children of the Most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes." It was in reference to this passage that our Lord said to the Jews in the 10th chapter of John, "Is it not written in your law, I said, ye are *Gods?* If he called them *Gods*, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" And as to names, it may still farther be remarked that *Elijah* means God the Lord, the strong Lord—*Eli* means my God— *Joshua* means the Lord, the Savior—*Abimael* means a father sent from God—and *Eliphalet* means the God of deliverance. The catalogue of such names might be greatly extended. They were freely applied to men, on account of the offices which they sustained, or because of the particular works which they were appointed to perform.

In like manner Christ was *called* the mighty God--(but never that we can learn the *Almighty*)—and the everlasting Father, or the father of the everlasting ages. The Septuagint have *megales Boules Anggelos, the Messenger of the Great Counsel.* Jesus himself declared, as we have already seen, that they were *called gods* unto whom the word of God came. The word of God

came to him—and why should he not also receive this name, and that too, without being considered *equal* in power and glory and of the same eternity with that Almighty Father from whom both he and the word itself proceeded? We read, 1st Cor. viii. 5, 6, "For though there be that are *called gods*, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) but to us there is but one God, *the Father*, of whom are all things, and we in him; *and* one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." Here the apostle freely admits that the *name god* has been applied to others than the Most High. But to *us*—that is, to Christians—there is but *one God*, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now if St. Paul had considered Christ and the Holy Ghost as *persons* in the Godhead, *equal* in power and glory with the Father, why did he not say, to us there are God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost? But St. Paul knew nothing of any such doctrine, as we shall yet attempt to show.

The foregoing considerations, we think, sufficiently explain the declaration of Jehovah to his Son—"Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." Heb. i. 8. Jesus, receiving the Divine Spirit in immeasurable fulness, was called God, as others had been before him. But at the same time it should be well understood that he expressly and repeatedly acknowledged his entire *dependence* upon the Almighty, declaring that he could of himself do nothing—and he certainly confessed his own inferiority when he said, "*For my Father is greater than I.*" John xiv. 28. And whether the epithet *Jehovah* is ever applied to Jesus Christ or not, we

find that it is frequently applied to places and things on earth. Thus we read, Gen. xxii. 14, "And Abraham called the name of that place *Jehovah*-jireh." Exodus xvii. 15, "And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it *Jehovah*-nissi." Judge vi. 24, "Then Gideon built an altar there, and called it *Jehovah*-shalom."

In this place we deem it proper briefly to notice the argument which Trinitarians draw from the 1st chapter of John's Gospel. The name of God is there emphatically applied to our Savior, according to the common version of the New Testament. But it should be understood that the word *logos*, here applied to Christ, is a word bearing the greatest variety of meaning. This word comes from the Greek verb *lego*, to speak—and we find that in the Lexicons it has no less than forty-five distinct significations. WAKEFIELD has rendered it *wisdom*. And among other definitions given by PARKHURST, we find the following—"a word," "speech," "discourse," "reason," "an affair, matter, thing, which may be the subject of discourse." The word is translated *wisdom* in the 8th chapter of Proverbs, where it is personified, and represented as saying, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." This divine energy, power or wisdom was with God in the beginning, even before the world was—by or through it he created all things—and in the fulness of times it was made manifest to the world by Jesus Christ, who came in the flesh. It was made flesh and dwelt among men. "And we *beheld* his glory (says John,) the glory as of the

only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." And in the same connexion the Evangelist affirms, "No man hath *seen God* at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, *he* hath declared him."

The divine wisdom and power were displayed in our Savior—and through him God was made manifest to the world. And as they were *called gods* unto whom the word of God came, this title pre-eminently belonged to Him who came from the bosom of the Father, full of grace and truth, and who is far exalted above all creatures in heaven as well as on earth! Jesus may therefore well be considered as a manifestation of God in the flesh. He is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express *image* of his person. In him we behold all of the great Invisible that mortals are capable of beholding. And while we cheerfully ascribe to him all the honor and glory that are due to his high and exalted name, we must render our highest devotions to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God!

2d. Jesus plainly declared, "*I and my Father are one.*" John x. 30. And this declaration has been thought to prove beyond all reasonable controversy that Jesus and his Father are *persons* in the same *being*. But however plausible this argument may at first appear, we are satisfied that it cannot long withstand the force of candid investigation. And if it should even be admitted as sound and tenable, it would effectually defeat its own object by proving entirely too much. Because the Scriptures say of two or more persons they *are one*, must we conclude that such persons constitute

but one *being?* Let us apply the test. St. Paul says, 1st Cor. iii, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planted anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth ARE ONE: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor." Are we to infer from this passage that Paul and Apollos, though existing in distinct *persons*, were in fact but one and the same *being?* The supposition is too palpably absurd to be entertained for one moment by any person capable of thought.

Again, we find that the same apostle in writing to his Christian brethren of Galatia, said, "*For ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*" Gal. iii. 28. But can any one suppose that St. Paul meant to certify the persons addressed that they had actually lost their individuality and really been all merged into one being? He simply meant that they had been called by one spirit, and in one hope of their calling—and that therefore a unity of feeling and purpose should pervade all their hearts, that thus they might strive together as one man for the faith of the Gospel.

Once more. The argument before us will be still more satisfactorily refuted by referring to the language of our Savior himself on this subject. He says, John xvii, "Neither pray I for these alone, (that is, not merely for the disciples who were with him) but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they *all may be* ONE; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be *one* in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou

gavest me I have given them; that they may be *one* EVEN AS WE ARE ONE." Now here we plainly perceive that our Lord prayed that all the believers in his name might be *one in the very same sense that he and his Father were one!* Did Jesus mean that they should all be concentrated into one *being*, though existing in many *persons?* No man, we think, can persuade himself into the belief of such a notion. But Jesus prayed that all his followers might be actuated by the same pure motives and feelings, and thus be enabled to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

And here it may not be improper to remark that though Paul and Apollos were engaged in the same work, and labored together to advance the same cause and to accomplish the same ends, and were therefore in a certain sense *one*, the one was a *greater* apostle than the other. In like manner, though the Messiah was filled with the spirit of God, and they were *one* in feeling and purpose and in the great work of human redemption, Jesus positively declared, "*My Father is greater than I.*" And their perfect *oneness* of spirit and purpose did not, therefore, constitute them *one being*, and *equal* in power and glory!

3d. But here we shall be met with an argument, thought to be more formidable than either of the foregoing, and which many persons have deemed entirely conclusive touching the subject before us. St. Paul says in the 2d chapter of Philippians, that Christ Jesus, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be *equal* with God." "Here," says the Trinitarian, "we find unequivocal proof that Christ considered himself to be *equal* with God,

and he must therefore be a person in the Godhead." We shall not pretend to deny that this argument appears highly satisfactory to many minds, and altogether unanswerable—nor shall we censure any person for thus believing. But we beg that the reader will not hasten to any such conclusion, but stay his judgment until we shall have bestowed some little examination upon this subject.

What is the subject of discourse with which this particular passage stands connected? It is the *humility* of our Savior. Suffer us to read the passage with the context. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefere God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name," &c.

Now was it truly a display of *humility* for Christ to claim an *equality* with the Sovereign King of the universe? Did he make himself of *no reputation* in asserting his *equal* power and glory with the Almighty and life-sustaining Jehovah? What greater honor—what higher reputation *could* he have claimed? And was this his *humility* and extreme lowliness of mind, which Christians are exhorted to imitate? No—St. Paul never reasoned after this fashion.

It is easily perceived that the entire force of the whole argument now under consideration, is derived from the meaning of the word *robbery*.

Christ "thought it not *robbery* to be equal with God." This word is *harpagmon* in the Greek, and means a thing *coveted* or *stolen*. WAKEFIELD renders the place, "Let the same disposition be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, though in a divine form, did not think of *eagerly* retaining this divine likeness." And even the Trinitarian Dr. CLARKE says, "But the word *harpagmon*, which we translate *robbery*, has been supposed to imply a *thing eagerly to be seized, coveted*, or *desired*; and on this interpretation, the passage has been translated, *who being in the form of God, did not think it a matter to be earnestly desired, to appear equal to God; but made himself of no reputation.*" And after stating certain reasons in favor of this translation, he still farther says, "On this account, I prefer this sense of the word *harpagmon*, before that given in our text; which does not agree so well with the other expressions in the context."

Christ, then, though the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person, and invested with power over all flesh, did not *eagerly covet* an equality with God; "but made himself *of no reputation*," and *humbled* himself to the capacity of a servant and to the reproach of the cross. This was his great *humility*. And that he did not aspire to claim an equality with his Father, is furthermore evident from his own language to the Jews, before cited. The Jews stoned him for what they called blasphemy, and because, as they alleged, that he, being a man, made himself God. Did Jesus labor to confirm them in the impression that he did make himself

to be the Supreme Divinity? He surely did not. But he immediately answered in these words, "Is it not written in your law, I said, ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, *I am the Son of God?*" Jesus promptly and positively denied that he claimed to be the Almighty—while it is plain that he merely claimed to be the *Son* of that Father, whose will he came into the world to perform.

4th. It may still be said that the disciples of Jesus *worshipped* him—and that inasmuch as they knew that all worship belongs to God, they thus clearly acknowledged Jesus Christ to be the Supreme Being.

But little need be said concerning this argument. Of course we readily admit that none but God himself is worthy of supreme adoration. But it is plain to every attentive reader of the Scriptures that they speak of a worship of subordinate beings, and even of men. What is *worship?* PARKHURST thus defines the word rendered worship in the New Testament:—"*Proskuneo*, from *pros* to, *kuneo*, to adore, which is from *kuon*, *kunos*, *a dog*, and so properly signifies *to crouch, to crawl*, and *fawn*, like *a dog* at his master's feet. *To prostrate one's self to*, after the eastern custom, which is very ancient (see Gen. xvii. 2, xix. 1, xxii. 7, xxvii. 29, xxxiii. 3), and still used in those parts of the world. It was the posture both of *civil reverence or homage*, and of *religious worship*. Whether the former or the latter was intended must be determined by the circumstances of the case."

Prostration in obeisence or supplication before a king or any superior, is *worship*. Hence we read, Dan. ii. 46, that Nebuchadnezzer, regarding Daniel as his superior, "fell upon his face and *worshipped Daniel.*" And we also read in the 10th chapter of the Acts, "And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and *worshipped him.* But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man." Dr. CLARKE has very well said on this passage, "As Peter's coming was announced by an *angel*, Cornelius might have supposed that Peter himself was an angel, and of a superior order; seeing he came to announce what the first angel was not employed to declare; it was probably in consequence of this thought, that he prostrated himself before Peter, offering him the highest act of *civil* respect; for there was nothing in the act, as performed by Cornelius, which belonged to the worship of the true God. *Prostrations* to superiors were common in all Asiatic countries." And of the answer of Peter, "*I myself also am a man.*" the same annotator says, "I am not an *angel;* I am come to you simply on the part of God, to deliver to you the doctrine of eternal life."

In like manner Jesus Christ received—and most deservedly—the homage of the children of men. But it should not be forgotten that he himself worshipped God. And in reference to religious or spiritual homage—such as belongs to God alone—Jesus declared this important truth, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him *only* shalt thou serve."

Are we told that every creature in heaven and

on earth will at last bow at the name of Jesus, and that every tongue will confess him to be Lord? We do not deny this fact. But who will receive all the glory? St. Paul gives the following answer,—"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord *to the glory of God the Father.*" Phil. ii. 10, 11. Jesus is the conquering Prince of life—and he will subdue all things unto himself, and make every subject willing in the day of his power. And when this work shall have been accomplished, he will deliver up his kingdom to the Father, (*who will receive all the glory through him,*) that God may be all in all.

5th. One more supposed proof of the Trinity still remains to be noticed. It is written in the 1st Epis. of John, v. 7: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." Now whatever this singular passage was intended to express, it is now well known, and very freely admitted by the learned among Trinitarians as well as Unitarians, that it does not belong to the sacred text. Dr ADAM CLARKE says, "*One hundred and thirteen Greek Mss.* are extant, containing the First Epistle of John; and the text in question is wanting in 112!" He furthermore says, "*All the Greek fathers omit the verse.*" The *Latin* fathers do not quote it! "It is wanting in the German translation of LUTHER, and in all the editions of it published during his lifetime." "It is inserted in our early *English* translations, but with marks of

doubtfulness." "In short," he says, "it stands on no authority sufficient to authenticate any part of a revelation, professing to have come from God."

And concerning the solitary Greek MS. that does contain the verse in question, the learned and Trinitarian HORNE says, after carefully examining the whole subject—"Upen the whole, it does not appear that the *date* of this *MS. can be earlier than the close of the fifteenth century!*" And in another place he says, "the disputed clause (meaning the passage before us) is *confessedly spurious.*"

Such is the testimony of able, zealous and learned Trinitarians themselves. And as the passage in question is shown by them to be entirely *spurious*, we do not think it either necessary or proper to occupy our time in any attempt to explain its meaning.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TRINITY.

(CONTINUED.)

HAVING in the preceding chapter stated the principal arguments in favor of the Trinitarian doctrine, and shown, as we trust, that they utterly fail to establish a dogma so manifestly opposed to reason, and so entirely inconsistent with plain Scripture truth—we are now prepared to offer a few objections which we deem conclusive and unanswerable, against this doctrine. Or, in other words, we shall briefly attempt to show that Jesus Christ is *not* the Supreme Divinity, but a dependent and a subordinate being. We believe that he is far exalted above all creatures—and we regard him, not as a mere man, but as the great Mediator or middle person between God and man—but we acknowledge only *one God*, who is *his* Father and our Father!

1st. *Jesus worshipped God.* He sang praises to the Almighty, and frequently retired from the people who pressed about him to offer up prayers to his Father. He thus manifestly acknowledged his dependence upon a higher power—nay, he even said, as plainly as he could speak, "*I can of mine own self do nothing.*" John v. 30. Now if Jesus was in reality the Supreme God, though veiled in the flesh and blood of man, why should he offer

his devotions to any other being in the universe? What possible meaning or intention could there be in such acts? Who could be his superior and the God of his religious homage? Did he worship an *equal?* And if so, it is not improper for us to inquire whether that *equal*, ever worshipped him? If prayers are exercised among *equals*, we can think of no possible reason why they should not be reciprocal. We can pray to our *equals* with no greater propriety than they can pray to us. And yet we are no where informed that God ever worshipped his Son!

But it has been supposed that Jesus Christ was both a perfect man and the perfect God—that manhood and the eternal Divinity were hypostatically united in him—and that when he prayed it was the prayer of his human nature to his Godhead. Be it so. What part of Jesus, then, was it that was his Supreme Divinity—that which perished upon the cross?—or that which outlived his human nature? The Trinitarian will certainly answer, "His body was that of a man, but his *spirit* was no other than God himself." Very well. So far we can understand the subject.

When, therefore, Jesus declared that his Father was greater than himself, he is understood to have meant that his Godhead was superior to his humanity. And when he earnestly prayed to his Father, the address is supposed to have proceeded from his human nature to his Supreme Divinity. Thus far the subject no doubt seems quite satisfactory to many minds—and here many persons rest their inquiries. But we hope to be pardoned if we push our inquiries a little farther. Let it not

be said that this subject is a holy *mystery*—for Scripture does not mean *mystery*, but the *revelation* of mystery.

Follow our Savior then to Calvary, and there behold him pouring out his soul unto death for the sins of men. His human nature is about to expire. But where is his *spirit*—his *Godhead?* Hear his dying words: "Father, unto thy hands I commend"—commend what? His humanity? No—for that is just ready to die upon the cross. His *Deity?* To whom shall he commend the Supreme God of the universe for safe-keeping and protection? But he said, "Father, into thy hands I commend MY SPIRIT." And who does not at once perceive from this declaration alone, that the *spirit* of Christ was one thing, and his Almighty *Father* a much greater? Nothing could be more palpably incongruous and preposterous than the suposition that the infinite Jehovah was commended into his own hands. But the *spirit* of Christ—all that constituted him the *Son* of God, was commended into the hands of Him from whom he received all his power, to whom he tendered his homage and devotion, and by whom he was exalted to be a Prince and a Savior!

Here, then, we have an argument which we consider conclusive and of irresistible force, against that doctrine which holds the tripersonality of the Godhead, and maintains that Jesus Christ is *equal* in power and glory with the Almighty Father! We have never heard, nor do we expect to hear an answer to this argument.

2d. Although Jesus had power over all flesh, and was the Lord of life and glory, his power was

all *derived* from God, and his glory was *conferred* upon him by his Father. Hence our Savior himself plainly said, "All power is GIVEN unto me in heaven and in earth." Mat. xxviii. 18. Now if he had eternally and independently possessed that power, there would have been no propriety in this declaration, nor would it have been consistant with simple truth! And then as to the glory of Christ, are we here reminded of his words: John xvii. 5, "O Father, glorify me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee *before the world was*"? We answer that in the same chapter he also says, "And the glory which thou *gavest* me I have given them." And again, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast GIVEN me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." The *glory* of Jesus, therefore, as well as his power, was all *derived* from God, upon whom he most freely acknowledged his entire dependence, and to whom he offered his prayers and supplications! And the reader is left to decide for himself whether two persons can be strictly *equal* in power and glory, when one of them has *received* his only power and glory *from* the other!

3d. St. Paul calls our Savior "the brightness of the Father's glory," and "the express *image* of his person." Heb. i. 3. And again he says of Christ, "who is the *image* of God." 2d Cor. iv. 4. And still again he pronounced Jesus to be "the *image* of the invisible God, the *first-born of every creature.*" Col. i. 15. Now no person can be the *image* of himself—and no *born creature* can him-

self be the original source of life to all creatures! A painting may strikingly represent the personal appearance of a man, and a child may wonderfully display all the moral qualities of his father. But it would still seem quite absurd to suppose that the *image* and the person whom it represents are in fact the same and exactly *equal*—or that the parent and the child, though existing in distinct *persons*, are in reality but *one being!*

The fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in our Savior, and the spirit of God was *given* him without measure—he was a perfect representation of the invisible God—and indeed he even said to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." And in explaining his meaning to Philip he said, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, *he* doeth the works." John xiv. God then operated *through* him—and we worship the Father *through* him—for he is the "one *Mediator* between God and men."

4th. The fact that Jesus was ignorant of some things that were well known to his Father, conclusively proves that he was not *equal with God* We need not attempt to notice the many instances in which he asked for information, with the obvious desire to obtain it—but our attention will be confined to a single passage, relating directly to this point. In speaking of the overthrow of Jerusalem, which he declared should take place during the *generation* then existing, Jesus said, Mark xiii. 32, "But of that *day* and that *hour* knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, NEITHER

THE SON, but the Father." Now how Jesus could be the Supreme God, and yet not know that day and that hour which were perfectly known to his Father, is a great mystery, which we leave for the believers of this doctrine to explain—*if they can*. Our neighbor, Mr. BARNES, has had the candor to say of the passage in question, "*This text has always presented serious difficulties.*" But these difficulties are found only in Trinitarianism. And we certainly think that they are of so *serious* a nature that they ought to bring the believers of this doctrine to sober and *serious* reflection.

5th. We can think of no sufficient evidence to warrant the belief that the Holy Ghost is a *person* in the Godhead—or indeed *any other person*. True, it is sometimes spoken of as a person—and so are wisdom and understanding and a thousand other things, personified in the Scriptures. But would it not be manifestly improper to speak of a real *person* as being *poured* out upon another? Certainly it would. And yet we read, Acts x. 38, that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth *with the Holy Ghost*, and with power." Now surely God did not *pour out a real person* upon his Son—but he anointed him with the spirit of divine truth and grace. And indeed we find that our Savior promised his disciples that he would send them *the Holy Ghost*, which he declared to be *the Spirit of Truth* and the Comforter.

What many people have considered *the third person in the Trinity*, is then in fact, strictly speaking, *no person at all!* It is that divine Spirit of power and truth, of grace and comfort, which proceeds from God—which enabled our Savior to per-

form all his wonderful works, and to speak as never man spake—and which still accompanies in some degree, the faithful ministrations of the Gospel of our salvation!

6th. The testimony of history on the subject before us is highly important—and it proves, according to the acknowledgments of Trinitarians themselves that the Trinity was not even considered a Christian doctrine until the 4th century of the Christian era! The learned and Trinitarian Dr. MOSHEIM says, "In the year 317, a contest arose in Egypt upon a subject of much higher importance, and its consequences were of a yet more pernicious nature. The subject of this warm controversy, which kindled such deplorable division throughout the Christian world, was the doctrine of *three persons in the Godhead;* a doctrine which, in the three preceding centuries, had happily escaped the vain curiosity of human researches, and been left undefined and undetermined by any particular set of ideas." And in the same connexion, he says that during all this time, that is, from the establishment of the Christian Church to the commencement of the 4th century, the most "profound silence" was observed in regard to this doctrine.

The Trinity, then, was plainly a new doctrine in the 4th century—or, at least, it had not before received the attention of the Christian world. And how was this novel doctrine at last defined, determined, and incorporated with the faith of professing Christians? Dr. MOSHEIM himself gives us the true answer in the same chapter of his history. Speaking of a general Council of the Church,

held at Constantinople in the year 381, by order of Theodosius, he says, "A hundred and fifty bishops, who were present at this Council, gave the finishing touch to what the council of Nice had left imperfect, and fixed in a full and determined manner, *the doctrine of three persons in one God*, which is still received among the generality of Christians."

Such then, is briefly the history of the Trinity, as given by an eminent believer of this doctrine. It was introduced into the Christian Church in the 4th century—we think it will be very likely to be put out in the 19th. Although it was *fixed* in a full and determined manner by 150 bishops, its foundations will fail—but the *Scripture* doctrine that there is "*one God and one Mediator between God and men*," will remain forever!

We have now proved that Jesus Christ worshipped God—that he *derived* all his power and glory from the Father—that his *spirit* was not the Godhead nor a person therein—that he is the *image* of God, and the first-*born* of every creature—that there were some things which he did not know, but which God knew—that the Holy Ghost is not really a *person*, but the spirit of Truth—and that the doctrine of the Trinity was unknown in the Christian Church until the 4th century!

Our next labor will be to show who and what Christ is. Meantime, the subject discussed in the present and preceding chapter is earnestly commended to the careful study of the reader, in the hope that he may be led into all truth on this and on every other subject of Divine Revelation.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

When certain officers who had been sent from the Chief Priests and Pharisees to bring Jesus of Nazareth to trial for being a disturber of the public peace and a pretended prophet, returned from their mission alone, they exclaimed of our Savior—"*Never man spake like* this man." John vii. 46. The officers heard Jesus speak—but they had never heard such speech before—they instantly became impressed with the thought that he was a wonderful person—and instead of attempting to lay hands upon him, they hastened back to publish his fame. Whether these officers considered Jesus to be anything more than a man of extraordinary powers, may well be questioned. Having heard of him through his enemies, they entirely mistook his true character—and when they came to hear his lessons of wisdom, moderation and peace, enforced with an authority and power which they had never before witnessed, they were at once disarmed of all power against him, and thought only of sounding his praise!

We learn from the chapter containing the exclamation of the officers referred to, that a great variety of opinions prevailed among the people concerning the person and character of our Lord. "And there was (it is said) much murmuring

among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people." All confessed that the works which he wrought were of a truly marvellous character—but while some seemed candid enough to judge of him by his conduct, and to pronounce him a good man, others, in the perverseness of a bad spirit, spake evil of his good deeds, and reviled him with the charge of wicked deception. While opposing opinions were thus freely expressed in regard to Jesus, he went up into the temple at Jerusalem in the midst of the feast, and there still more astonished the people by the wisdom and power of his instructions. "And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" A meek and unpretending man, who had sat at the feet of no doctor of the law, nor sought instruction at any school of the age, stood forth in the midst of the people and discoursed in words that glowed with fire and burned with love! The people, knowing the meanness of his birth and the history of his humble life, but charmed with his unearthly eloquence and awed by his authority and power, began among themselves to inquire, "Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?

Jesus, witnessing the astonishment of the people, modestly certified them that the doctrine which he taught was not his own, but his who sent him to each man the way of life. And as he spake with

boldness in the midst of his foes, some of them of Jerusalem said, "Is not this he whom they seek to kill? But lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ. Howbeit, we know whence this man is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is." Still, it is added, "that many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" The Pharisees and Chief Preists were now filled with alarm—and they instantly despatched officers to arrest Jesus and to bring him to trial. But the officers, as we have already seen, quite forgot the object of their mission, and returned only to tell the wonders which they had seen and heard. The Pharisees, vexed in spirit and filled with indignation, said unto them, "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed."

The causes of the very different opinions which prevailed among the people concerning the person and character of our Lord during his ministry on earth, are easily understood. The common people heard him gladly, and were profitted by his instructions—while such as held high stations in the church, and were reputed as skilful in all divine wisdom and knowledge, dreaded the influence of his ministry and doctrine, and maliciously sought to destroy him. And when we extend our view still farther, we learn that the rejection of Jesus by his kinsmen according to the flesh, had been foretold by the ancient prophets, and was necessary to

carry out and fulfil the purposes of divine wisdom and grace.

But aside from the opinions of the Jews, diversities of belief in regard to the Messiah seem to have been introduced into the Christian church as early as the days of the apostles. The Cerinthians, Gnostics and other heretical sects, soon sprang up and began to introduce their new forms of doctrine into the church of the Redeemer. While the Cerinthians maintained that Jesus of Nazareth was a mere man, and the natural son of Joseph, the Gnostics entirely denied his humanity, and contended, "on the principle that every thing corporeal is essentially and intrinsically evil," that he was merely a man in appearance. Controversies on this subject (though not in regard to a trinity of persons in the Godhead) seem to have been continued until the commencement of the fourth century, when the great Arian strife rent the church into factions. The Arians "maintained that the Son of God was totally and essentially distinct from the Father; that he was the first and noblest of those beings whom God had created—the instrument, by whose subordination he formed the universe; and, therefore, inferior to the Father both in nature and dignity: also, that the Holy Ghost was not God, but created by the power of the Son. The Arians owned that the Son was the Word; but denied that Word to have been eternal. They held that Christ had nothing of man in him but the flesh, to which the *logos*, or Word, was joined, which was the same as the soul in us." The Arian doctrine, after having very extensively prevailed, was publicly condemned by the authority ot the church, and

pronounced a dangerous and pernicious heresy—and the Trinity, or the doctrine of three persons in one God, was substituted in its place, and has ever since been considered the true doctrine of Christ by a majority of professing Christians.

But we need not attempt to trace the history of opinions in the Christian church in regard to the Messiah. We intend merely to bring into view the three prominent opinions which are now held on this subject, and to show which we hold, and which we believe is sanctioned by the word of God.

The most common opinion on the subject before us is, that Jesus Christ is the second person in what is called the *Trinity*, and is therefore fully equal in power and glory with the *Almighty himself!* This we humbly consider one of the extremes of the errors into which professing Christians have fallen with respect to the Messiah. The Scriptures surely tell us nothing of the Trinity. No word or expression, embracing any such idea, has ever yet been found in the word of God. It is manifest to every candid reader of the Bible that it speaks of one God, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But who can pretend that we there read that this one God exists in *three persons*, and that these three persons combined make one God? We can truly say that we have never found anything of the kind in the divine record, though we have seen much of it in the creeds of human device, and heard it in the preaching of men.

The doctrine of the Trinity, we think, has been successfully refuted in the preceding chapters.—We there showed, after fairly considering the

principal arguments relied upon to establish this doctrine,—

1st, That Jesus worshipped God, and could not therefore have been the Supreme Divinity himself, since it would be extremely absurd to suppose that the Almighty was ever his own worshipper, or the worshipper of any other being. And as to the attempt of Trinitarians to explain this difficulty, by alleging that Jesus was both a perfect man and the Sovereign Jehovah, and that his inferior part prayed to his superior part, we proved that even the *spirit* of Christ, over which death had no power, was entirely distinct from the Godhead.—For when the human nature of our Savior perished upon the cross, he exclaimed, in the agonies of his death, "Father, into thy hands I commend my *spirit*." The *spirit* of Jesus, then, which could not die, was not the Almighty, but it was commended into the hands of the Almighty. We showed,—

2d, That although Jesus possessed all power in heaven and earth, he expressly declared that that power was *given* him, and acknowledged that of himself he could do nothing. Nay, he even declared of the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, that it was *given* him.—These declarations cannot be harmonized with the notion that Jesus eternally possessed his power and glory, and *derived* neither from any other being in the universe. We showed,—

3d, That Jesus is declared in the Scriptures to be "the *image* of the invisible God, and the *first-born of every creature*." An *image*, it appears to us, cannot be the same as the person which it rep-

resents—nor has it ever seemed to us proper to say that the Living God, from whom all creatures derive their existence, was ever the *first-born* of any creatures! We showed,—

4th, That Jesus was ignorant of some things which were well known to his Father, and that he even confessed in reference to a certain time: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, *neither the Son*, but the Father." And to assert, in view of this declaration, that Jesus Christ was the Almighty God, and in all respects equal to his Father, is to disregard the Scriptures, and to utter words in violation of sense. We showed,—

5th, That what many people call the third person in the Trinity, is in fact no person at all. Jesus himself has told us that the Holy Ghost is *the Spirit of truth* and the Comforter. This spirit was *poured out* upon our Lord—for we read that "God *anointed* Jesus of Nazareth with the *Holy Ghost* and with power." A *person* was not poured out upon the Messiah—nor was a *person* sent among the apostles on the day of Pentecost, when they were "filled with the *Holy Ghost*, and began to speak with other tongues, as the *Spirit* gave them utterance." The Holy Ghost, then, is nothing more nor less than the spirit of truth and of power, which proceeds from God. And why this Spirit should be called a person in the Godhead, or God the Holy Ghost, we have never yet been informed. And we showed,—

6th, That, according to the testimony of Trinitarians themselves, the doctrine of the Trinity was unknown in the Christian Church until the com-

mencement of the fourth century. It is purely a doctrine of the Papal Church, and was baptized in the name of Christ by no other than human authority. We reject it as an old error, as foolish and as false as the monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation.

The other extreme of error in regard to our subject, holds that Jesus Christ was a mere man, of the earthy race of Adam, and the natural son of Joseph. This opinion we cannot hold and never could believe, because we are persuaded that it stands opposed to the manifest doctrine of the New Testament. The account which we have in the Scriptures of the birth of Jesus Christ into the world, proves that birth to have been *miraculous*. He had no father on earth, but was begotten of the Holy Ghost—and hence he is expressly and repeatedly called *the* Son of God, and *the only-begotten* Son of God! Surely, we are not at liberty to say that these and similar expressions are without meaning, and to assert in opposition to what they obviously signify, that Jesus Christ was a mere descendant of the earthy Adam, and came into the world just as other men do.

The first of earthy Adam was directly created by the Lord without the agency of any creature. God moulded him into form of the dust of the ground, and breathed into him the spirit of life, and thus constituted him a living soul. This creation was truly miraculous, because neither a man nor a woman was made the agent by which it was effected. It was a more wonderful work than the conception of Jesus by the Holy Ghost in the Virgin Mary. In the former case God acted without

any agent, in the latter the woman was made the instrumen by which the work was wrought. And when we are told, in the face of Scripture testimony, that it is unreasonable to believe in the miraculous conception of Jesus of Nazareth, we have only to ask in reply, what then shall we think of the original creation of man, which was a far greater miracle?

From the first man, formed of the dust of the ground, the entire race has proceeded. All alike partake of his nature, his infirmities and his death. Hence the Apostle Paul says, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." When the fulness of time had come, God brought into the world the second man, who stands at the head of the new or spiritual creation, as the first man did at the head of the old or earthy creation. And this second man, though pronounced to be the quickening spirit and the Lord from heaven, and though begotten of the Holy Ghost, was born of a woman, to show the connexion in him between the divine and the human nature, and to prove that he is in fact the *Mediator* or middle person between God and men! As a partaker of flesh and blood, he was touched with the feeling of our infirmity, and tempted in all points like as we are—but as the Son of God, the only-begotten and well-beloved of the Father, *he sinned not.* In his humiliation he died the death of man—but as the resurrection and the life of the world, he triumphed over the powers of death, and gloriously ascended to heaven! And though he took part of our nature by being born of a woman, and died as a man,

it was to convince us that we also shall be made partakers of his nature in the resurrection from the dead!

St. Paul has most clearly and beautifully set forth this subject in his discourse on the resurrection and the life immortal. He says, 1st Cor. xv, "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, the first Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Now it appears to us that the important truth here expressed, is denied and entirely shut out of view by the supposition that Jesus Christ was nothing more than an extraordinary man, a distinguished reformer, and an eminent prophet. And this supposition seems also to undermine the very foundations of Christian faith and hope, and to leave man with no certain and blessed assurance of that immortal and heavenly inheritance which the Scriptures have promised us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Reader, think on this subject. Jesus is declared to be the *second* man, the quickening spirit, and the Lord from heaven. What are we to understand by these expressions? Do they convey to the mind no significance whatever, but leave us still to *suppose that* Jesus was nothing more than

a descendant of the first man and the earthy Adam? If *Cain* had been called "the second man," the expression might well be understood in this sense. But in this case there could have been no propriety in calling him the quickening spirit and the Lord from heaven. It is in Jesus, in his image and nature that we are promised life and blessings, after having died in the nature of Adam. This is the hope of the Christian. But if Jesus be *not the second man*, and the head of the new and spiritual creation, in which we are promised life, we are without hope, and our faith is vain.

All our assurance of the blessings of immortality and heavenly bliss is founded upon the promise that we shall be made alive in Christ. And the joy of this assurance is increased even to fulness and perfection by faith in the promise that *all* who bear the image of the first man shall be made alive and blessed in the nature of the second man.—Hence the Apostle Paul says of the Savior, Jesus Christ, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto *his glorious body*, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue *all things* unto himself." Phil. iii. 21. And again, it is written, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," 1 Cor. xv. 22. When this declaration shall have been fulfilled, it is added by the inspired apostle, that all things will then be made subject to Jesus, *even as* he also shall be subject unto the Father, *that God may be all in all!*

The reader, then, will understand that we reject both the Trinitarian and the Humanitarian doctrines. We deny that Jesus was the Supreme God;

and we also deny that he was a mere man. Not holding either of these notions, which we consider the two extremes of error on the subject before us, we maintain what the Scriptures plainly declare, that Jesus Christ *is the only begotten Son of God*, the second man, the quickening spirit, the Lord from heaven, and the one Mediator between God and men. As to the pre-existence of Christ, that is, his existence before his appearance among men in the flesh, we do not feel fully authorized to reject this doctrine. St. Paul says of Jesus, "Who is the image of the invisible God, *the first-born of every creature.*" And in speaking of the ancient fathers, he also says, 1st Cor. x. 2–4, "And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink: (for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, *and that Rock was Christ.*") And we still further find that St. Peter, in speaking of the salvation wrought out by Christ, says, in his 1st Epistle, and 1st chapter, "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time *the spirit of Christ which was in them* did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

Now in these passages Christ is certainly spoken of as having existed, and as being with men and infusing his spirit into them, long before his advent into the world. It should also be remembered that he frequently spake of himself as having come down from heaven. And this declaration perfect-

ly agrees with the testimony of St. Paul, that Jesus is *the second man, and the Lord from heaven.*— We are informed in the 16th chapter of Matthew, that Jesus inquired of his disciples, saying, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Now mark the answer of Jesus: "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not *revealed* it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." What was this *revelation* that was made to Peter by the Almighty? Was it that Jesus stood before him as a *simple man?* It surely needed no revelation from heaven to acquaint Peter with this fact. He had eyes, and could see. But Jesus, we believe, was something more and greater than a man. And the *revelation* which Peter had received from heaven enabled him to perceive that Jesus was *the Son*, and *the only begotten Son* of the Living God!

But a still stronger passage relating to this subject, is found in 2d Cor. viii. 9: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye, through his poverty might be rich." Now it would seem extremely absurd to suppose that God ever became poor in any sense whatever. He is infinitely self-sufficient, and necessarily and eternally rich in all his perfections and glories. But Jesus Christ was *rich*, and he became *poor*. And it has well been asked, "If Jesus Christ, as some contend,

was only a *mere man*, in what sense would he be said to be rich? His *family* was *poor* in Bethlehem; his *parents* were very poor also; he *himself*, never possessed any *property* among men, from the *stable* to the *cross;* nor had he anything to *bequeath* at his death but his *peace.* And in what way could the *poverty* of one make a multitude *rich?* These are questions, which on the Socinian scheme can never be satisfactorily answered." Admit that Jesus lived before Abraham, and that at the proper time he came down from heaven, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, and humbled himself even to the death of the cross—and the whole subject is at once rendered plain to every mind. We see how he was rich—how he became poor, and how we through his poverty are made *rich!*

While we thus speak, however, the reader will understand us to mean that Jesus Christ is a *created* and a *dependent* being. The glory which he had with the Father before the world was, he plainly declares, was *given* him—his power was all *derived* from God—and he freely confesses that of himself he could do nothing! In what is called *the eternal sonship of Jesus*, we certainly have no faith. We believe that there was a time when he did not exist, but that God created him. He is not only distinct in his person from God, but he is the child and the creature of God. But he still holds a relation to the Divinity which no other creature bears, being *the only begotten Son* of the Father. It is promised that all men shall be made alive in his nature—but even then he will hold the pre-eminence as our Elder Brother and the Head

of every man. God has made him a Prince, and a Savior, and given him power to have life in himself—and through him God will raise the dead and finish the work of redemption.

Dr. CLARKE, of the Methodist Church, in his attempt to prove that there never was a time when Jesus did not exist, has expressed exactly what we believe in regard to the notion of *eternal sonship.* He says, in his note on Luke i. 35, "Here I trust I may be permitted to say, with all due respect for those who differ from me, that the doctrine of the *eternal sonship* of Christ is, in my opinion, antiscriptural and highly dangerous. This doctrine I reject for the following reasons:

"1st. I have not been able to find any *express* declaration in the Scriptures concerning it.

"2ndly. If Christ be the Son of God as to his *divine* nature, then he cannot be eternal: for *son* implies a *father;* and father implies, in reference to *son, precedency* in time, if not in nature too.—*Father* and *son* imply the idea of *generation*, and *generation* implies a *time* in which it *was* effected, and *time* also *antecedent* to such generation.

"3dly. If Christ be the *Son* of God as to his *divine* nature, then the *Father* is of necessity *prior*, consequently *superior* to him.

"4thly. Again, if this *divine nature* were *begotten* of the *Father*, then it must be in *time;* i. e. there was a period in which it *did not* exist, and a period when it *began* to exist. This destroys the *eternity* of our blessed Lord, and robs him at once of his Godhead.

"5thly. To say that he was *begotten* from all *eternity*, is in my opinion absurd; and the phrase

eternal Son, is a positive self-contradiction. ETERNITY is that which has no *beginning*, nor stands in any reference to TIME. SON supposes *time*, *generation*, and *father;* and time also *antecedent* to such generation. Therefore the conjunction of these two terms *son* and *eternity* is absolutely impossible, as they imply essentially different and *opposite* ideas."

The arguments here presented, though intended to prove that Christ has existed from all eternity, and as to his *divine* nature was never begotten, plainly set forth the truth in regard to the *sonship* of the Messiah. We believe that Jesus in reference to his whole nature, and in every sense of the word is *the Son of God*—that there was a period in which he *did not* exist, and a period when he *began* to exist—and that the Almighty is *prior* in existence, and consequently *superior* to him. As a creature existing on the earth and in the human form, Jesus was not and could not be considered "*the first-born of every creature*"—for many generations had been born long before his appearance in the world. But Jesus was *begotten* when he began to exist as the first of all God's creatures.—And St. Paul has said, Heb. i. 7, "And again, when he bringeth in *the First-begotten* into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." Here Jesus is represented as being *the first-begotten* of the Father *before* he was brought into the world. "This (it may truly be said) destroys the eternity of our blessed Lord, and robs him at once of his Godhead"—for "SON supposes *time*, *generation*, and *father;* and time also *antecedent* to such generation." We therefore re-

ject the doctrine of the *eternal sonship* of Christ, not because we suppose that he has eternally existed, but because we believe that he was *created* by that One Eternal and Self-Existent Jehovah who was never *begotten* in any way, and who never *began* to exist!

What we have now said in regard to the existence of Christ as a creature of God before his appearance in the flesh, the reader is desired candidly to consider for himself. The writer wishes not to force his peculiar belief upon any person. He claims no infallibility, but humbly confesses his great liability to err. Still the Scriptures are our guide—and he who attempts to preach the doctrine of Jesus, should teach just what he honestly believes the Scriptures to teach. And whether we be right or wrong in our views of the pre-existence of the Son of God, we feel very confident that the Scriptures present him before our minds as a being far superior to man. He stands at the head of that better and spiritual creation, in which we hope to enjoy immortal life and blessings, after our feeble earthly tabernacles shall have mouldered away in the dust. Jesus, under God, is our Savior and the Savior of the world—and *in him*, we rejoice to believe, that all who die in Adam shall be made alive and blessed. This is our hope, our joy, and the crown of our rejoicing.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MISSION OF CHRIST.

For what purpose did the Son of God come into the world? On this subject many persons have strangely erred—and in their attempts to exalt the Son, they have fearfully detracted from the loveliness of the Father. It has been supposed that God was incensed against the human race—that the glittering sword of his vengeance was unsheathed and about to strike the fatal blow that would have brought the whole race of Adam to unceasing woes—but that Jesus, moved with tenderness and compassion, flew upon the wings of love to the world, and shielded guilty and helpless man, by consenting that the sword of the avenger should be bathed in his own innocent blood! In this way it has been thought that vindictive justice was turned back from its course—that the indignation of the Lord was stayed in its fearful might, and that man was thus afforded a hiding place and a shelter from the overflowing scourge of vengeance! With such notions of God and his Son, men have been taught to fly to Jesus to escape the wrath of God! And what seems still more wild and extravagant, persons who thus believe and teach, maintain, after all, that God and Christ are but *one and the same being!!*

What a strange confusion of ideas is thus presented before us! God burning with fierce indig-

nation against men—Jesus loving and pitying them, and laying down his life to save them from the endless curses of God's wrath—and yet God sent his Son into the world on an errand of mercy, and they are in fact all the while the same Being! Did ever the folly of man in its wildest excesses, conceive of any thing more strangely contradictory and shocking to all common sense?

But when we leave such wild vagaries and turn our attention to the Scriptures, we there find nothing of the kind, but the very reverse. The mission of Christ into the world was not only in obedience to the Divine will, but it was emphatically a manifestation of the *great love* which God bore to the children of men. On this subject it is not necessary that we should cite a multitude of passages. One or two positive declarations of the Divine Word ought to be considered quite sufficient. In the 5th chapter of Romans, we read as follows:—"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But *God commendeth his love* towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Here it is worthy of special remark, that Christ did not come into the world and suffer and die to *secure* for us the love of God—but his death was the commendation and the proof of that love which already existed in the Divine mind. No scheme of God was baffled—no change was effected in him—no new principle was introduced into his government—no work was wrought but that which he planned—and no love was displayed but that *which* proceeded from *Him* alone!

Again, we read, Ephesians, 2d chapter, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his *great love* wherewith he loved us, even when we were *dead in sins*, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved,) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might show *the exceeding riches of his grace*, in his kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus." The lowest condition of man is here described, for he is even represented as being *dead* in sins. And yet God in his great love sent his Son to be the Savior of the world—and intended in this way to display to future ages the exceeding riches of his kindness and grace through the great Deliverer of men from the power of sin and death! To us this bright display is now made—and generations yet unborn will rise up to praise God for the hopes and the comforts of the Gospel. It was the intention of our Father in heaven to open in the world through his only begotten Son a dispensation of mercy and love, which will continue to bless our race to the latest generation—and which will not end until that Son, seeing the travail of his soul with satisfaction and joy, shall deliver up the mediatorial kingdom to the Father, *that God may be all in all!*

Jesus, then, came into the world to do the will of God and to commend his love to the children of men. He died to abolish the whole law of sacrifices by the one perfect offering of himself; and that he might thus be enabled to rise from the dead, and give us the assurance of our future and immortal life. He now lives as the exalted Prince and Savior, being Lord of the dead as well as of the

living—and though all things have been given into his hand, he has himself testified that of all the Father hath given him, he will lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day! We believe on his word and confide in his promises, and we are thus enabled by faith to look onward to the time when death shall be despoiled of his victoty and mortality swallowed up of the triumphs of life, when the work of redemption shall be finished, and the happiness of heaven shall be full and perfect!

The principal doctrinal truths which Jesus came into the world to teach, may be briefly comprised in the following particulars:

1st. He taught the universal paternity of God, declaring him to be the Father of all men, and kind even to the unthankful and the evil. And from this common relation of God to the spirits of all flesh, and his impartial and universal beneficence, Jesus drew the great lessons of duty which his Gospel requires at the hands of man. After urging us to love our enemies, to bless those who curse us, to do good to those who hate us, and to pray for those who despitefully use and persecute us, he thus states the *reason* by which these duties are enforced:—"That ye may be the children [that is, in *character*] of *your Father* which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." God then *is* the Father even of such as neglect these duties—but the obedient become his children in feeling, in spirit, in conduct, and in character.

2d. Jesus also taught the universal brotherhood *of man*, declaring to the multitude and to his dis-

ciples, "*and all ye are brethren.*" This truth, as well as the foregoing, is repeated in a great variety of forms, and may be regarded as one of the essential truths of the Gospel. St. Paul not only declares that "there is one God and Father of all," but he also testifies that all are members of one body, and "*that the head of every man is Christ.*" See 1st Cor. xi. 3. And,

3d. Jesus has furthermore taught, and herein consists the greatest glory of his revelation, that man is destined to a holy and happy existence beyond the grave. On this momentous subject no certain and comforting hope was ever enjoyed, until He who is himself the resurrection and the life, came to bring life and immortality to light through his Gospel. Nor has he merely given us assurances of *future life*, but he has taught us that in the future world the children of the resurrection shall be *equal* unto the angels, and free from the power of death, and the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. And that that happy and glorious life is intended in the purposes of God for all mankind, is proved by the testimony of the apostle, who declared that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Such then are the distinguishing features of the doctrine of the Son of God. Much more could be said in reference to these things—but we have aimed merely at a very brief statement of the purpose for which our Savior came into the world, and of what he taught the children of men. Here we pause for the present, intending in the chapters that shall follow to consider the subject of salvation, and to show how God can be the Savior of

all men, according to the Scriptures, and yet the *special* Savior of none but believers. In the consideration of that subject we shall find it necessary to notice at greater length several topics merely glanced at in this chapter.

The reader is desired to ponder with a candid spirit upon what we have said concerning the person and the mission of the Son of God—to guard against believing merely because we have written, and to search only for *truth*. And may God, from whom all truth must come, guide you into the right way, and give you peace.

CHAPTER XIV.

UNIVERSAL SALVATION.

ST. PAUL said, 1st Tim. iv. 10, "For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, *who is the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe.*" Guided by the truth here expressed, it shall be our object in the following chapters to establish two important facts—namely, 1. That God is the Savior of *all men;* and, 2. That the true believer in Christ enjoys a *special* salvation. Before proceeding with this labor, however, it may not be improper barely to notice an objection which is frequently urged against the doctrine which we believe.

It has been said that "if Christ and his apostles taught the doctrine of universal salvation, it seems unaccountably strange that they should have suffered so much opposition and abuse at the hands of wicked and ungodly men—inasmuch as this doctrine is exactly suited to the depraved feelings and corrupt passions of the vile and the irreligious." Now persons who thus speak, and who fancy that they have found a great wonder, on the supposition that our doctrine is true, might find a very plain answer to their great objection in the very words of St. Paul, already cited. It is there declared in language which none need misunderstand, that the apostle and his fellow-believers in Christ labored and suffered reproach because they trusted

in the living God, who is the Savior of *all men*, especially of those that believe. The very thing, therefore, which the objector most coolly assumes would have exempted the apostles from all opposition at the hands of the ungodly, was the means of exposing them to reproach, and of bringing down upon their heads the malice of wicked men!

Who were they that bitterly persecuted Jesus of Nazareth, and reviled and abused the chosen messengers of his truth? Were they the publicans and sinners and common people, who were not reckoned among the pious, the holy and the sanctified elect? No. These despised classes of people loved the instructions of our Lord, and listened with wonder and admiration to the "gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth." The 15th chapter of Luke begins with these words, "Then drew near unto him (Jesus) all *the publicans and sinners, for to hear him.* And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." And we are also informed in the 12th chapter of Mark, that *the common people heard Jesus gladly.*

The instructions of our Lord were peculiarly adapted to the wants of the publicans and sinners and the common people—and they heard him with satisfaction and delight. They were not the people who pursued Jesus with deadly malice and inveterate fury, and at last nailed him to the cross. But the chief priests and pharisees, the scribes and the doctors of the law, who boastingly esteemed themselves the only true servants of God, and who claimed for themselves all the religion in the world, were the enemies and the murderers of the Prince

of life! And it must be confessed that they were most corrupt and wicked men. But, we must be permitted to say that the doctrine of universal salvation was neither consistent with their faith, nor congenial to their depraved feelings. They trusted in themselves that they were righteous—and as a necessary consequence, they despised others. And they could not endure even the thought that the Messiah promised their fathers, should be a light of the *Gentiles*, as well as the glory of his people Israel! Such were the men who heaped reproaches upon the meek Son of Man, and at last pursued him unto death. We will not say that men of a like spirit and similar character now oppose the preaching of a doctrine which embraces others besides themselves, and promises the final salvation of all men! On this subject the reader can judge for himself.

We are informed in the 22d chapter of the Acts, that when St. Paul defended himself before the Jews at Jerusalem, they eagerly sought his life because he assured them that he was commissioned to go and preach the gospel to the Gentiles. The apostle represented Jesus as saying unto him, "Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles. And they (the Jews) gave him audience unto *this word*, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air, the chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him." It is therefore

plain that Jesus and his apostles were reproached and abused, not because they preached a doctrine which limited the grace of God to a few or a part of the human race—but because their doctrine was too benevolent in its character and too extensive in its provisions, to be congenial to the partial and corrupt feelings of their persecutors and revilers. Or, in other words, they labored and suffered reproach *because* they fearlessly avowed their trust in the living God, whom they declared to be *the Savior of all men*, especially of those that believe! The believers of this doctrine are still reproached for proclaiming the grace of God and the good tidings of salvation to publicans and sinners—and for teaching that God is the Savior of all men. But we trust that the violence of the warfare is past—and we are not without hope that even those who now "limit the Holy One of Israel," and set bounds to the saving power of the Son of God, may yet be brought to believe and to rejoice that the same grace which secures their salvation is sufficient to save even *the chief of sinners!*

But let us come at once to the main subject of discourse. The two important facts which we propose to establish are clearly set forth in the declaration that the living God "is the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe." To our minds the doctrine of universal salvation is obviously taught in this passage—and we cannot conceive that it is in the power of language to express this doctrine in more plain and positive terms. If God "is the Savior of all men," according to the simple declaration before us, it certainly needs no argument to convince the candid and unprejudiced

believer of the divine word, that all men will be saved. It would seem to betray a strange lack of good sense and common discernment to suppose that God is the Savior of any man, who never was and never will be the subject of salvation. As well might we affirm that God is *not* the Savior of those whom he will save. The proposition that God is the *Creator* of all men, is never for a moment made the subject of controversy—and for the simple reason that there is no room whatever for any difference of belief in regard to its meaning. All understand it to signify just what it plainly expresses. And we should be inclined to suspect that there was a want of common understanding in that man who should seriously contend that this proposition means nothing more than that God is the Creator of a *part* of the human race! But, it is true, that when a favorite creed is to be sustained, in opposition to Scripture truth and in violation of all reason, no argument is considered too absurd, and no sophistry too glaring to be pressed into service!

There are some passages of Scripture which are so simple and so easily understood, that we know not how to attempt an elucidation of their meaning. Of this class is the one now before us. It is so perfectly plain that we feel unable to say one word that will render its meaning more plain, and more intelligible to every capacity. It has never to our knowledge been pretended that the passage is not faithfully translated, or that there is any thing in the connexion which seems to favor any other than the obvious and clearly expressed meaning. What more then, or what less can we say,

than that it *does* mean just what it manifestly expresses?

But while we thus speak, the thought may arise in the mind of the reader, "Have not the learned divines who believe in the doctrine of endless misery, carefully considered this portion of the Scriptures, and perfectly reconciled its meaning with their own doctrine?" Some of them, we confess, have made this attempt. And it is indeed amusing beyond all expression to see how strenuously they have labored to invalidate its proper signification, and how little apparent success has attended their mighty efforts. We have recently examined two works written expressly to disprove the doctrine of Universal Salvation—Edwards against Chauncey, and Parker on Universalism. The former of these writers was distinguished in his day for great powers of mind—and the latter is equally distinguished in our day for quite opposite qualities. Now it is a strange fact that neither of these doctors happened to think of the particular passage of Scripture now in question—or, thinking of it, neither of them chose to make it the subject of a single remark! Still, we are bound to admit that some of our opposers have buckled on their armor like men, and actually ventured what they would have us consider an *explanation* of the text. We feel very thankful for this small favor—and shall now in our turn examine the explanations which they have been kind enough to offer. We shall first give attention to the Calvinistic exposition, and afterwards to the Arminian. If, after hearing these profound and learned expositions, and in view of the high sources whence they emanated, the reader

should be disposed to repeat the ancient declaration, "*Great men are not always wise,*" he is informed that that is a matter with which the writer has no concern.

Dr. GILL, the eminent Calvinistic Baptist Commentator, whose praise is in all the churches of the sect to which he belonged, has the following comment on these words, "who is the Savior of all men"—"In a providential way, giving them being and breath, preserving their lives, and indulging them with the blessings and mercies of life; for that he is the Savior of all men, with a spiritual and everlasting salvation, is not true in fact." There, reader, who will ever think again of asking for an explanation of this text? Does not God give *breath* to all men? And is not he *therefore* the Saviour of all men? How direct and conclusive the argument seems! It comes to the point in a moment! And who is able to resist the tremendous force of such overwhelming logic?

But a strange and stubborn thought seems here to be presented to the mind. According to the comment which we have just quoted, it is plain that God is the Savior of the whole brute creation in the very same sense that he is the Savior of all men—that is, he gives to the brutes "being and breath, upholds them in their beings, preserves their lives, and indulges them with the blessings and mercies of life; for that he is the Savior of all *brutes* with a spiritual and everlasting salvation, is not true in fact." And this, Dr. GILL maintains, is what we are to understand by the proposition that God "is the Savior of all men." And the primitive Christians, he would have us believe, labored

and suffered reproach for proclaiming to the world the wonderful and highly important revelation that "God is the Savior of all men in a providential way, giving them being"—aye—and only of it—*breath* too, "and *indulging* them with the blessings and mercies of life!"

Now this miserable attempt to explain away the obvious sense of an important declaration of Scripture truth, deserves nothing better than ridicule. It has neither good sense, nor wit, nor ingenuity, nor any thing else to recommend it to the serious attention of any reasonable being. And we marvel exceedingly that a man of learning and great reflection would not feel ashamed to write such a comment, and send it out into the world as an explanation of Scripture. But he is not the only man who has sought to "darken counsel by words without knowledge." And the manifest absurdity of the comment should not be ascribed entirely to the author himself—but partly to the false and partial system of faith to which he was wedded as Ephraim was joined to his idols.

The persecutors of Jesus and his apostles believed that God gives being and breath to all men, upholds them in their beings, and supplies them with the blessings and mercies of life. And the simple proclamation of this truth would have been no revelation at all—nor would it have subjected the heralds of the cross to the cruel *reproaches* which they were caused to suffer for trusting in the living God as the Savior of all men. We are therefore brought to the conclusion that the Calvinistic view of the text throws no new light upon its meaning, and entirely fails to show that it signifies something *very different* from what it plainly expresses.

Let us now see how the Arminians manage the matter. It may be thought that they have found out some better system of explanation. Calvinism is not much thought of in these days. And the greatest admirers of the doctrine of endless misery for a vast proportion of the human race, prefer to do the work of *expounding* on the free-will plan. This, they fancy, furnishes a very convenient mode of settling all difficulties. According to this plan, the most positive declarations of divine truth mean anything or nothing, just as the *free-will* of man may happen to decide—so that the masters of this potent invention can shape things to suit themselves and their own creed. Dr. ADAM CLARKE, the great Methodist Commentator, has shown us how charmingly this whole system works. St. Paul was plain-hearted enough to declare that *the living God is the Savior of all men*, and to leave us to conclude that he actually meant just what he said. But the learned doctor whom we have mentioned has stepped forth in his might to correct our simple blunder, and to show, by the magic of free-will, that the declaration in question embraces nothing more than a doubtful *offer* of salvation to any man! We here give the whole of his lucid annotation on the words, "*Who is the Savior of all men*"—"Who has *provided* salvation for the whole human race; and freely *offered* it to them in His word, and by His Spirit." Here the explanation is presented in two words—*provided* and *offered*. There is, however, no very striking resemblance, that we can detect, between the text and the comment. The former says nothing about *providing* and *offering*—and the latter speaks about nothing else. But the free-

will plan can evidently do wonders. And it is entirely to this plan that we are to impute the apparent disagreement between a simple passage of Scripture and what is called an *exposition* of such passage.

Now in view of this attempt at explanation, the reader is desired candidly to consider this question: —Is it true that salvation is freely *offered* to the whole human race in *the word* of God, and by his Spirit? It is meant, you will understand, that such offer is alleged to be made in *this life*—for it is positively denied that any offer of salvation will be made to men in *the future world.* The writer of this comment himself knew that millions of our race die without even having heard of *God's word.* And yet he tells us that God is the Savior of all men, because he has provided salvation for the whole human race, and freely *offered* it to them *in his word,* and by his Spirit!" Surely, this is hard straining to make the Scriptures countenance a favorite theory of human device!

It is easily perceived that according to the exposition now before us, God's being *the Savior of all men,* means that he has *provided* salvation for all, and freely *offered* it to them in his word and by his Spirit—but is after all the Savior only of a *part* of mankind. But if *providing* salvation for all men, and *offering* it to them make God their Savior, then it is certain that he may be the Savior of all men, *without saving one individual of the human race.* For all for whom he *provides* salvation, and to whom he freely *offers* it, may be eternally lost, and God still be the Savior of all men, according to this doctrine!

We are, however, still so stupid on this subject that we cannot exactly understand how God can be the Savior of any man whom he never saves. True, the learned doctor whose comment we have just cited, has been kind enough to inform us that God is the Savior of all men because he has *provided* salvation for all, and freely *offered* it to them in his word and by his Spirit—though this author must have known very well that according to his own doctrine, this *offer* never was and never can be made to all men. Still, he perhaps thought it best to say something—and we suppose that he said the very best thing that he could say. The man is not, therefore, to be censured. But we nevertheless feel somewhat disposed to test this exposition by the aid of a very simple illustration, for which we cannot claim even the merit of great originality.

Let us suppose then that I should see ten men seated upon the wreck of a vessel fast sinking under the water, and should *provide* for their rescue, and *offer* to save them. Would I not then be their Savior? The answer from every person is, no, not unless I saved them. There can be no salvation where there is none, whatever may be the provisions and offers. But suppose that in addition to the provisions and offers, I should actually succeed in saving five of the men, would I not then be the Savior of them all? The answer again is, no, I could not be the Savior of any more than I saved. But suppose that I should redeem nine from death, and that the remaining one of the ten should be so foolish and perverse as to choose death rather than life, would I not then be the deliverer of them all?

Again the reply comes, there was one that you did not save—he was *one* of the *all*—and therefore you did not save all!

Now it would seem impossible to convince any man of common understanding that I was the Savior of *all* of those ten men, when in fact I saved only a *part* of them. And if I should publish to the world that I saved them *all*, every body would understand me to mean just what I said—and no person living could suppose that I meant nothing more than that I *provided* means and *offered* to save them *all*, and at the same time suffered a part of them to sink to the bottom! It is therefore a plain contradiction in terms to say that *God is the Savior of all men*, but will not save all men. And all the learned subterfuges that have been resorted to in order to explain away the obvious sense of the Scriptures, have only resulted in the demonstration that it is impossible to make it appear that they plainly *express* one thing, but *mean* a very different thing!

The particular passage in question, the reader will be careful to notice, says not one word about God's *providing* and *offering* salvation to all men, or to any man. But it states a very simple fact in very plain language—*The living God is the Savior of all men.* Why then try to obscure the manifest sense of this declaration, by talking about *provisions* and *offers*, which amount to nothing at all, without the actual gift of the promised blessing? Our Savior did not say, "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven," and *provideth* and freely *offereth* life unto the world—but, "*and* GIVETH life unto the world." He also says

in the same connexion, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." And in another chapter it is also declared, "For the Father loveth the Son, and hath given *all things* into his hand." And from these united testimonies of Scripture we learn that all things have been given into the hands of Jesus of the Father—that all that have been given him shall come to him, and not be cast out—and that Jesus is *the bread of God which giveth life unto the world!* All this perfectly agrees with the declaration of the apostle that THE LIVING GOD IS THE SAVIOR OF ALL MEN. And a great many similar testimonies of the Scriptures could be adduced in proof of the same glorious truth.

We propose, however, to offer but one passage in confirmation of the fact that God is the Savior of all men. But before presenting this passage, we think it proper briefly to explain what we mean by that salvation of which all mankind shall partake. In the present world all men are not the subjects of salvation, as we shall yet show—but we trust that when all the promises and purposes of the Almighty shall be fulfilled, all men will be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth. St. Paul certifies us in the 3d chapter of Philippians, that Jesus Christ our Lord "shall *change* our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his *glorious body*, according to the working whereby he is able even

to subdue all things unto himself." This passage teaches us that we shall be delivered and raised up from the corruptible constitution in which we now live, and through the mercy and favor of God, be made holy and happy in the glorified nature of Jesus Christ. And in speaking on this same subject, the apostle declares in the 8th chapter of Romans, that the whole creation shall be *delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God!* Such is the salvation of which all mankind shall be made partakers. It consists in the deliverance of the *human family* from *corruption* to *incorruption*, from *dishonor* to *glory*, from a *natural* body to a *spiritual* body, and from the *earthly* nature to the *heavenly* nature —for, "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." This salvation is promised in the word of God, not for any portion of the human race, but for all mankind—the whole creation. And in view of this salvation God is declared to be "*the Savior of all men.*"

The particular passage which we propose to introduce to confirm what we have already said on the subject of Universal Salvation, is 1st Cor. xv. 22, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." This passage plainly affirms that all men die in Adam or the earthy nature—and that *all men* shall afterwards be made alive in Christ or the heavenly nature—and it therefore clearly teaches the doctrine of Universal Salvation. And it may also be said of this passage that it is so perfectly plain that we know not how to attempt an explanation of its meaning. But

here again the reader may desire to know how our learned opposers manage this passage—and may also think that we ought to notice what they have to say about its meaning. This desire is quite reasonable, and it shall be gratified.

The Methodist Commentator, Dr. CLARKE, who has given to the world a very lengthened commentary on the Scriptures, chose to pass by the passage under consideration, without offering one word of comment—although the verse before it and the one after it were both thought worthy to receive his attention. But we think that he did far better, even with his utter silence, than others whose comments we are about to notice. In a recent work, entitled, "Lectures on Universalism, by Rev. JOEL PARKER, D. D., President of the Union Theological Seminary, New York," we are favored with an explanation of the passage before us, which the author no doubt thought to be very satisfactory. True, he has not quoted the passage correctly. But perhaps it suited his purpose just as well as if he had been a little more careful. We will not be so nice, however, as to make this circumstance the ground of any particular complaint. Some doctors feel that they have a kind of right to manage things their own way. And indeed a doctorate would be worth nothing, if it did not confer some special privilege. Possibly, however, the printer was at fault—for it happens that even the number of the verse is not correctly stated. The entire comment of this doctor and President (though he is not a President now) is not very long, and we here present it entire. He says, pp. 57, 58, "The 16th verse of the 15th chapter of 1st of Corinthians, is

often quoted as a proof of the doctrine of universal salvation. For, as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive? This whole chapter is taken up with an argument for the resurrection of Christ's disciples, drawn from the resurrection of the Savior himself. Neither the salvation of saints nor sinners is hinted at in the text—the text plainly speaks of the resurrection of the body, and nothing else. Time will not permit us to protract these examinations."

Now we cannot but regard it as peculiarly unfortunate that this author was so hard pressed for time—and especially when we consider that his famous Lectures have been preached and published and preached and published again for many years, and still farther consider that we have quoted from the very latest edition. But while we regret that he was so sadly cramped for time, there is one comforting reflection still left us—and that is, that if he had had an abundance of time, and had largely extented his "*examinations*," they would probably have been of no great value. In the short specimen of *examination* with which we have been favored, we are informed that "this whole chapter is taken up with an argument for the resurrection of Christ's *disciples*." But here it seems proper that we should ask the question, if we may lawfully assume such liberty, How many of the human race die in Adam? Even our opposers themselves will answer, *All men*. How many then shall be made alive in Christ? The passage under examination gives the true answer—"*Even so* in Christ shall all be made alive." It is plain, therefore, *that* the very same all men who die in Adam shall

be made alive in Christ. And what a sorry attempt it is to set aside this manifest proof of universal salvation, for a man coolly to remark that the whole chapter is taken up with an argument for the resurrection of *Christ's disciples*, and then to dismiss the subject with the convenient declaration, "time will not permit us to *protract these examinations!!*" *Examinations!* Famous *examinations*, truly! The man puts forth his naked and daring *assertions*, unaccompanied by any thing wearing the appearance of a decent investigation—and then, really fancying that he has been engaged in the work of inquiry, he dashes off with the flourish, "time will not permit us to *protract these examinations!*" But we will have some mercy upon this poor man, even if he had none upon himself—and we therefore take our leave of him.

In a work, entitled, "Notes, Explanatory and Practical, on the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, by ALBERT BARNES," we are furnished with another and very *different* explanation of the passage before us—though both authors belong to the same school, and if we mistake not, to branches of the same individual church. The comment of this author is too long to be presented entire—for he has a remarkable faculty of *continuance*, and seems capable of writing on a particular subject long after he has written all that he really has to write about it. But the following extract contains the substance of all that he has said—"The argument of the apostle here (he says) is ample to prove that all men are subjected to temporal death by the sin of Adam; and that this evil is counteracted fully by the resurrection of Christ, and the resurrection

through him. And to this point the passage should be limited. If this passage means, that in Adam, or by him, all men became sinners, then the correspondent declaration 'all shall be made alive' must mean that all men shall become righteous, or that all shall be saved. This would be the natural and obvious interpretation; since the words 'be made alive' must have reference to the words 'all die' and must affirm the correlative and opposite fact. If the phrase 'all die' there means all became sinners, then the phrase 'all be made alive' must mean all shall be made holy, or be recovered from their spiritual death; and thus an *obvious* argument is furnished for the doctrine of universal salvation, which it is difficult, if not impossible, to meet. It is not a sufficient answer to this to say, that the word 'all,' in the latter part of the sentence, means all the elect, or all the righteous; for its most natural and obvious meaning is, that it is co-extensive with the word 'all' in the former part of the verse. And although it has been held by many who suppose that the passage refers only to the resurrection of the dead, that it means that all the righteous shall be raised up, or all who are given to Christ, yet that interpretation is not the obvious one, nor is it yet sufficiently clear to make it the basis of an argument, or to meet the strong argument which the advocate of universal salvation will derive from the former interpretation of the passage. It *is* true *literally* that ALL the dead will rise; it is *not* true literally that all who became mortal, or became sinners by means of Adam, will be saved. And it must be held as a great principle that this passage is *not* to be so interpreted as to *teach the* doctrine of the salvation of all men."

Now this interpretation, the reader will perceive, entirely sets aside and overthrows the former one about the whole chapter being "taken up with an argument for the resurrection of *Christ's disciples.*" Here it is shown that the passage in both its parts plainly speaks of *all men.* It is, however, alleged, but without any good reason, and merely to dodge the whole truth, that the passage must be limited to *the single point of the resurrection*—that is, without regard to the *condition* in which the subjects of the resurrection are to live! And yet in this very chapter it is declared that "*the dead*" —not any particular *class* of mankind—but that *the dead* shall be raised in *incorruption, power, honor, glory,* in a *spiritual body,* and in the HEAVENLY IMAGE. Why, then, we ask, is it not clearly proved that all men, being made alive *in* Christ beyond death, will be saved from the power of sin and the bondage of corruption, and made holy and happy in the *heavenly* nature of our glorified Redeemer? The following answer is given by the author from whom we last cited:—"It *must* be held as a *great principle* that this passage is *not* to be so interpreted as to teach the doctrine of the salvation of all men." Ah! why MUST it be so held? What is it that causes this fatal *necessity?* We do not understand this flourish about a "*great principle.*" The principle may be *great* enough, but we should like to know what it is, that *we* might see its *greatness* too. The word of God, we judge, has been given as the rule of our faith. But if any man in his profound researches and deep and far-reaching wisdom has found "*a great* principle" which *forbids that* we should understand that word

according to its plain and obvious sense, we think he ought at least to be accommodating enough to let us know what that "*great principle*" is. It is surely not kind to keep the world in the dark in regard to such an important discovery. But I suppose we *must* try to be satisfied with the mere declaration that it MUST BE held as a *great* principle that the Scriptures, whatever they say, must *not* be so interpreted as to make them teach that the living God is *the Savior of all men!* Still, we cannot but experience something of the feeling of poor Galileo, who, after swearing upon his knees that the world was flat and never moved, stamped his foot and exclaimed, "*And yet it moves!*" Even in view of the alleged *necessity* for holding the "*great principle,*" (though we do not know what it is,) we *must* be permitted to say, *And yet God is the Savior of all men.*

CHAPTER XV.

SPECIAL SALVATION.

In the preceding chapter we have spoken of, and endeavored to prove the doctrine of Universal Salvation. But the Scriptures also speak of a salvation that is not universal, but *special.* The living God "is the Savior of all men, *especially of those that believe.*" Of the common salvation all mankind shall be made partakers. That salvation consists in the deliverance of *the whole creation* from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. All shall be raised through Jesus Christ from sin, death and corruption, and made equal unto the angels of God in heaven. "For as in Adam all die, even so *in* Christ shall all be made alive." And this heavenly and immortal life of which all shall partake in the resurrection-state, is the common or universal salvation.

But in addition to all this, *believers* in Christ experience a *special* salvation, which comes through sanctification of the Spirit and *belief* of the truth—and which is enjoyed in this *present life,* where *faith* is exercised—and not in the *future world* where there will be no faith, and consequently *no salvation by faith.* It is by confounding these two salvations together and making them one, that some persons fancy that they find "a great principle," which will not allow them to believe that God "will have all men to be saved, and to come

unto the knowledge of the truth." But if they understood the proper distinction between the universal and the special salvation, they would soon perceive that their "great principle" is quite a small affair, after all, and that fair interpretations of the word of God might be tolerably managed without it.

St. Paul says to the Ephesians, 2d chapter, "For by grace are ye saved *through faith;* and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." This *special* salvation, which is *consequent of faith*, and which none but *believers* can enjoy, is a *present* salvation. Mark the expression—"By grace *are ye saved.*" The persons here addressed were *already* in a state of *salvation*, enjoying its blessings. He who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ with the heart unto righteousness, and lives and acts conformably to the spirit of the Gospel, is *saved.* He enjoys the rich blessings of that *present* salvation of which the apostle spoke, when he declared to Titus that they *had been saved* from folly, disobedience and deception, from the service of divers lusts, from living in malice and envy, from being hateful, and from hating one another. And he also knows, under the happy influence of his faith, what it is to be *delivered* or saved from bondage to the fear of death.

Now persons dying in the age of infancy can know nothing of such salvation—because they never *believed* the truth, nor exercised *faith* in Christ. Still, we hope and trust that they will be made partakers of that future salvation which God has promised to our race, and in view of which he is declared to be "the Savior of all men." They

will receive the heavenly inheritance without ever having enjoyed it *by faith.* And such, we rejoice to believe, will at last be the case even with such as now reject the Son of God, and are strangers to all the peace and joy of his holy religion.

We cannot believe that any declaration of the word of God was ever intended to contradict and falsify any other declaration of that word. And when the apostle declared that God is *specially* the Savior of those that *believe,* he did not surely mean to intimate that the previous declaration, namely, that *God is the Savior of all men,* is not strictly true. Both declarations are true. And indeed if God were not the *absolute Savior* of more than those who are *specially* saved, what sense would there be in saying that he is the *special* Savior of those that believe? In what would the *special* salvation consist, if there was no other salvation? If there is but *one* salvation, it cannot be *special.* And it is therefore plain from the language of the apostle that there is a salvation of which all men shall partake—and there is *also* a *special* and *present* salvation, which none but *believers* can enjoy, and which is in fact the result or the fruit of their faith.

Dr. CLARKE says of the expression, "*specially of those that believe*"—"What God intends for ALL, he actually gives to *them* that believe in Christ, who died for the sins of the world, and tasted death for every man." According to this notion, God *intends* salvation for some upon whom he will never confer this blessing. That is, he intends salvation for all, but does not intend it for all! These are marvellous intentions, indeed! But we must doubt the right of any man to impute

such a jumble of nonsense to the living God. The apostle does not say, God is *not* the Savior of all men, but *only* of those that believe. But he plainly teaches a very different doctrine—for he declares that God is the Savior of *all men*, and *also* the *special* Savior of those that believe. Believers will not only be blessed with that salvation of which all who die in Adam shall partake—but they *also* enjoy a *special* and *present* salvation through faith in the truth and by their obedience to God.

It may not be improper briefly to notice the Scripture usage of the word *specially*. St. Paul says, Titus i. 10, "For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, *especially* they of the circumcision." Now did the apostle mean that they of the circumcision were the *only* unruly and vain talkers and deceivers? Certainly not—but *they in particular* sustained this hateful character. Again, he says, 1st Tim. v. 17, "Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honor, *especially* they who labored in the word and doctrine." It is plain that the apostle would have *all the elders* that ruled well counted worthy of double honor—but more *particularly* they who labored in the word and doctrine. Once more, he says, 2d Tim. iv. 13, "The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but *especially* the parchments." Now did Paul really want his cloak and books, or did he desire nothing but the parchments? Suppose Timothy to have come to Paul, and the weather daily becoming more cold, Paul asks, Where is the cloak I sent for? O, says Timothy, I did not bring you *either* the cloak or the books, because you said in

your letter *especially* the parchments—and that showed plainly enough that you did not really mean that I should bring either the cloak or the books, (though you mentioned them both, but with a sort of *unmeaning intention*,) but the *parchments only*. How do you suppose, reader, that the apostle would have liked that kind of reasoning? It seems to us that he could not have entertained a very exalted opinion of the understanding of his student—nor would he have felt very comfortably under his disappointment!

We therefore conclude that the word *specially* in the last clause of the passage to which we have given particular attention, was not intended to disprove the former part of the passage. It is just as certain, according to the testimonies of the Scriptures, that God is the Savior of *all men*, as that he is *specially* the Savior of *believers*. And although we do not expect by our faith to secure immortal blessedness in the heavenly nature, which is the free gift of divine grace, and which all who die in Adam shall enjoy — we nevertheless feel and acknowledge the great importance of believing the truth of Christ, that we may be saved from the love and practice of sin, and from bondage to the fear of death. There is a peace that passeth all understanding, and a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory in believing the gracious promises of God's word—and there is pure and exalted happiness to be found in the faithful practice of Christian duty.

Let us, therefore, friendly reader, render unfeigned gratitude and thanksgiving to "the Father of mercies" for the blessings of the Gospel—let us do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our

God—and while we labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, let us ever strive to be numbered among those who are *specially saved.* Amen.

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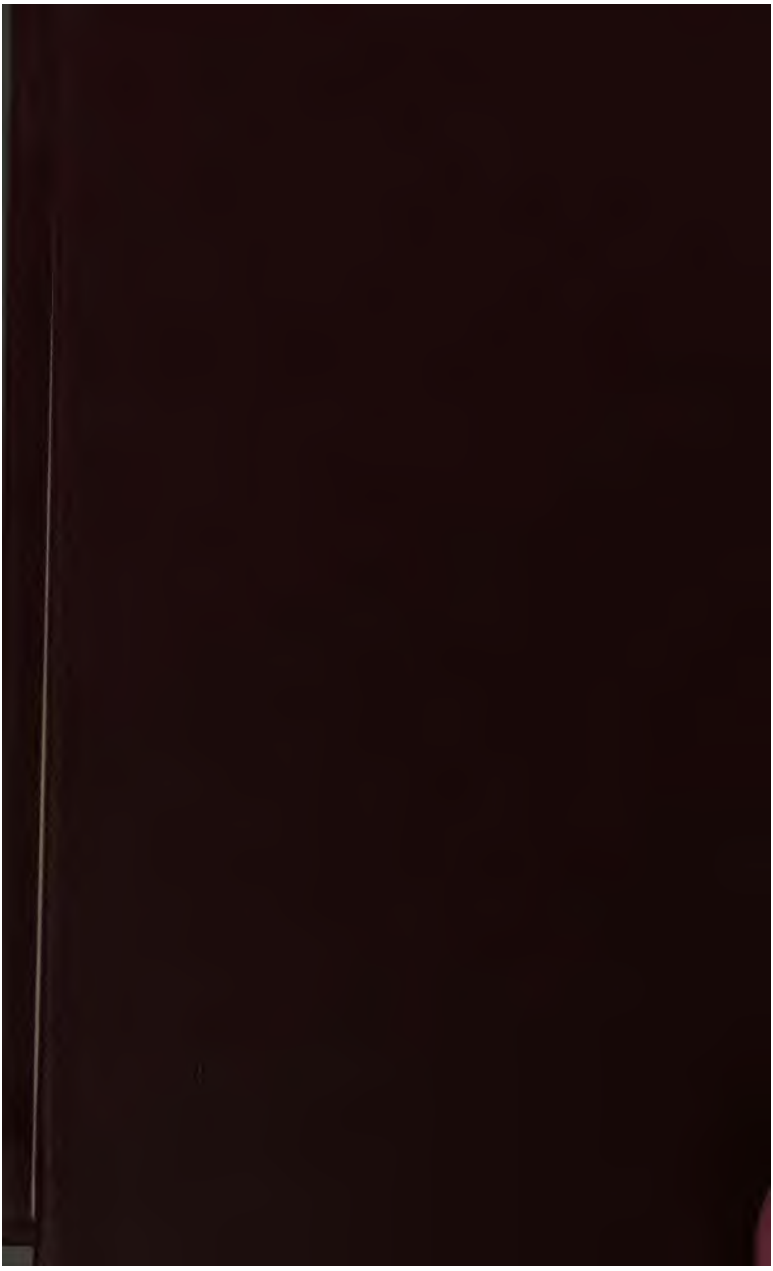
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